SOCIAL SUPPORT AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study examined the nature of social support among teachers and the effects of social support on job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale. Seventy-five secondary school teachers occupying a range of teaching positions were interviewed from 20 schools in the Christchurch metropolitan area. Social support was found to relate to and to predict job satisfaction, positive morale and negative morale but not to predict teachers' leaving intentions. Wide variations in the characteristics, composition and teacher perceptions of their support networks were observed. Overall workplace sources of support, (colleagues, supervisor) appeared to be the most important sources of support. Despite this nonwork sources of support (spouse, friends) were important sources of emotional and socialising support. Most teachers stated they had moderate needs of support and were also satisfied with the support they received. In spite of this, just under one-half of the sample described recent situations in which they felt they had lacked social support. Teachers also outlined a number of factors which influenced the seeking and giving of support. Finally, teachers identified behaviours they perceived as supportive and unsupportive and made recommendations of how colleagues could be more supportive. The implications of these results are discussed with reference to intervention programs designed to enhance social support in secondary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The last couple of decades have seen considerable changes taking place within the teaching profession. There have been changes in the system, curricula, course material, discipline procedures and community expectations. In addition there has been increased competition for jobs and promotion, and teaching is now recognised as a stressful occupation. Social support has recently been suggested as a means of coping with stresses in teaching. However there are wide variations between schools in terms of the supportiveness of colleagues and the support systems established within them for teachers. Although teachers in practice have realised the necessity of maximising their support, virtually no research has been conducted on teachers and social support. This exploratory study aims to discover the nature of social support among teachers and its effects on their job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale.

The remainder of this chapter begins with an overview of the concept and measurement of social support. The next section focuses on one of the areas in which social support has been applied, namely the workplace. The effects of social support on workers are discussed followed by an examination of the sources of this support. The final section concentrates specifically on teachers

and examines the literature on teacher support and the links between support, the professional socialization of teachers, stress and teachers' job satisfaction. Chapter two outlines the methodology of this exploratory research and the statistical analyses used. The third chapter describes the results of the research and these are then summarised and the implications discussed in the following chapter. Chapter four also outlines the conclusions and limitations of the research together with suggestions for future research.

1.1 DEFINITION AND MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Although the concept of social support has emerged only recently in discussions of stress and health, the idea that interpersonal relations are important to the quality of an individual's life is an old idea. It is implicit in early religious, sociological, psychological, literary and medical thought (House, 1981). However, it was Durkheim's study of suicide over 100 years ago and his finding that suicides were most prevalent among individuals with few close ties that prompted social scientists to investigate the importance of social ties.

In the last 30 years two major developments have stimulated research on social support. In the late 1950's the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health conducted a nationwide study which explored public attitudes towards mental illness and how individuals attempted to resolve distress in their own lives. The results indicated that

many individuals preferred to use their own informal sources of help (for example family, friends, neighbours) rather than seek help from mental health professionals (Gottlieb, 1983a). These findings initiated research on community support systems as well as the birth of the community mental health movement and its subsequent interest in social support. Secondly, epidemiologists Cassel (1976) and Cobb (1976) hypothesised that individuals experiencing stressful life events are protected or buffered from harmful physical or psychological consequences by group support. On the basis of these claims that support may reduce stress, improve health and, in particular, moderate the effects of stress on health, social support was recognised as an important topic for research and action within community psychology. Indeed, the majority of studies on social support have been conducted within this stress and disease framework.

In recent years the term social support has gained rapid popularity even though few researchers have explicitly defined their use of the term (Brownell and Schumaker, 1984). Many studies have combined a range of variables into a single measure of support whilst other researchers have defined support in terms of marital status, presence of a confidant or the frequency of social contact. Some definitions have been vague or circular. For example, Lin, Simeone, Ensel and Kuo (1979, p.109) state:

"Social support may be defined as support

> accessible to an individual through societal ties to other individuals, groups and the larger community."

Therefore, researchers have tended to conduct research without a theoretical framework which Antonucci (1985) suggests is due to the concepts accompanying intuitive appeal and its colloquial popularity. This has resulted in a range of understandings of social support as well as inadequate and often varied operationalizations of the term.

One of the first comprehensive definitions of support was provided by Cobb (1976, p.304) who conceived of support as information belonging to one or more of the following three classes:

> "Information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved.... that he is esteemed and valued.... that he belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation."

Although Cobb's definition offers implications for the operationalization of support, it neglects material aid or action-oriented support and focuses on emotional support and individuals' perceptions of support (Gottlieb, 1983b). Kahn and Antonucci (1980) define social support as interpersonal transactions which involve (a) affect which is the expression of liking, admiration, respect or love, (b) affirmation which is expressions of agreement or acknowledgement of the appropriateness or rightness of some act or statement of another person and (c) aid which is tran-

sactions in which direct aid or assistance is given. These two definitions are among some of the most frequently-mentioned definitions. They illustrate that although there is agreement over which aspects of relationships are included in the term social support, there is little concensus over which aspects are the most important (House, 1981).

Recently, investigators have realised the importance of recognising that support is a multidimensional concept. Further, it is also useful to assess the various types of support as each type may have differing effects. House (1981) defined four broad types of supportive behaviours which can be classified into more specific acts of support. He stated that all four types should be viewed as related and potential components of support. First is emotional support which involves caring, trust, love and empathy. This form of support is included in all schemes of support and when individuals think of others as being 'supportive' they tend to think primarily of emotional support (See Gottlieb, 1978). Second is instrumental or material aid support which involves behaviours that directly help the person in need, for example giving transportation to work. Third informational support involves providing individuals with information necessary for them to cope with problems, for example, how to obtain sick leave. Finally appraisal support also involves information but information that individuals can use in evaluating themselves, for example when a work supervisor

tells a new worker they are working satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily.

Measurement of Social Support

A variety of methodological problems has plagued social support research although some have been attributed in part, to the conceptual problems in the research field (Leavy, 1983; House and Kahn, 1985). Many studies have utilised retrospective designs and have relied exclusively on correlational evidence while measures of support and psychological disturbance have been assessed simultaneously. In addition, expected relationships have not been confirmed and findings have been open to competing explanations (Bruhn and Philips, 1984). Even though a number of social support measures are available there has often been limited or no information available regarding their psychometric properties (Leavy, 1983; Cohen and Syme, 1985).

Methods for measuring support have also varied widely across studies. Gottlieb (1983b) identified three measurement strategies based on their level of analysis. The first approach concentrates on the quantity of social relationships or the existence of social ties (social integration is seen as equivalent to social support). Researchers focus on the objective characteristics of support such as the number of friends or neighbours, participation in organisations, marital status and the frequency

of interaction with others. These measures although reliable, stable and easy to obtain provide only an indirect measure of support as they omit assessing the quality of the relationship.

This recognition that support has both qualitative as well as quantitative elements has led to a second approach. This approach emphasizes the quality and content of social relationships or the extent to which relationships provide adequate support. Researchers have tended to focus on self-reports which have led to a concern that perceptions of support may be influenced by personality, response style, present morale or psychiatric status (Gottlieb, 1983b).

The final approach, the network approach, focuses on the structure of the social relationships (or networks) that individuals are linked to. More specifically it examines how the structure of a network and the pattern of ties within it affects the behaviour of individuals who form the network. The characteristics of the pattern of ties are analysed and described along dimensions such as reciprocity and size, rather than the characteristics of the individuals themselves (Hall and Wellman, 1985). Gottlieb (1981, p.203) outlines that the link between social support and network analysis is:

> ".... that networks may be structured in such a way as to leave individuals with many or few channels of communication and with a large or small fund of social resources that

can be mobilized in the coping process."

Although network analysis is useful and there has been growing interest in applying it to the study of social support, it has several limitations. No information is provided about the content of social support, the context in which it occurs or how individuals establish, maintain and reshape networks over time.

As the recognition has grown that social support is a multidimensional construct so too has the corresponding recognition that it should be measured accordingly. A number of theorists advocate measuring the helping resources actually extended, peoples' perceptions of support, the structural properties of the social system in which people are embedded, and the characteristics of peoples' links to others (Leavy, 1983; House, 1981; Gottlieb, 1983b). This allows for an examination of the inter-relationships between these different dimensions and the differing effects of the dimensions on psychological and physical well-being.

The concept of social support has been applied to both general stressful life events and also to specific stresses such as marital disruption and unemployment. Researchers have also investigated the influence of social support on the area of work stress.

1.2 SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

The basic idea that social support has beneficial effects on organisations and individuals has been pre-

valent for much of the past 40 years. Organisational theory and research has emphasised the important contributions made by such support to worker morale, satisfaction and organisational effectiveness. For example the human relations school advocates that supportive supervisors can improve the morale and productivity of their workers. Cohesive and supportive work groups are seen as critical features of Likert's theory of effective organisations. However it is only in the past decade that research has focused explicitly on social support. Researchers investigating social support in the workplace have tended to focus on the effects of support on stresses and strains and the sources of this support. Most of these studies have been conducted in the stress-at-work context (Kasl and Wells, 1985) which is examined first, followed by the findings of the research areas investigating the sources and effects of work support.

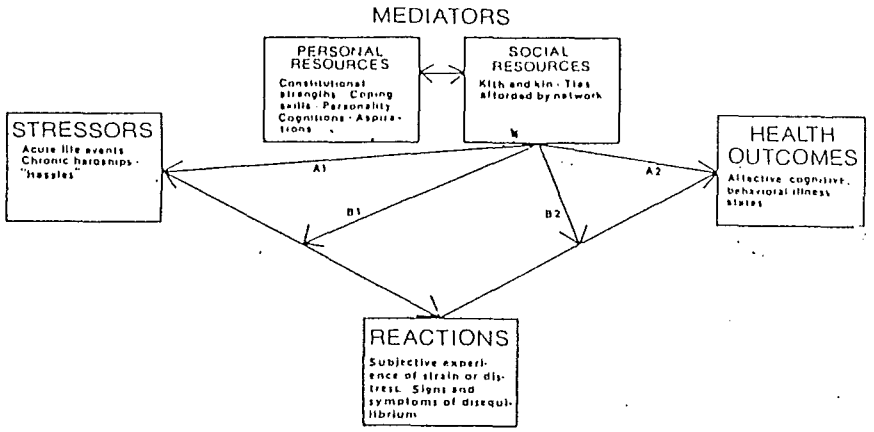
The Effects of Social Support

Figure 1 illustrates Gottlieb's (1983b) stress-process model which is based on findings that stress has harmful effects on physical and mental health. The process begins with an individual or group who are exposed to stressors (heavy workload, job loss). Reactions are produced to these stressors which culminate in health consequences (ulcers, high blood pressure). However individual variations have been noted in the sequence of stressor-reaction and reaction-illness. This suggests

that other variables (individual or situational), termed 'mediators' or 'moderators' may modify or interact with the variables in the stress process (Gottlieb, 1983b). Social support represents one such variable. Social support has been found to exert two different types of influence on the process. First, a moderating or buffering effect which occurs in the stress-to-reaction sequence (B1) and from reaction-to-health outcome (B2), the most commonly researched effect. This means that under conditions of high stress, social support buffers the individual from potentially harmful effects. Because these beneficial effects increase as stress increases, the implication is that social support will have its strongest beneficial effect on health among people under stress.

FIGURE 1

A Framework for Examining the Effects of Social Support in the Stress Process



A1: Direct effect of social support e.g. prevents exposure to certain stressors
A2: Direct effect of social support e.g. boosts morale and sense of well-being
B1: Buffering effect of social support e.g. preserves feelings of self-esteem and sense of mastery when exposed to adversity
B2: Buffering effect of social support e.g. protects against depression when stressful reactions occur.

Conversely, social support may have little or no beneficial effects for individuals not under stress. Second, social support may have a direct or main effect on health (A2) or support may shield individuals from exposure to stress (A1). In other words, social support can directly enhance health or well-being regardless of peoples' stress levels because it meets important needs for security, social contact, approval, belonging and affection (House, 1981).

Recent interest in social support is largely due to the intriguing buffering hypothesis which has dominated research efforts. However an understanding of the difference between the buffering and direct effects has both important practical implications for example, for targeting intervention groups and implications for understanding how social support affects both stress and health.

One of the earliest studies examining the effects of support was conducted by Gore (1978) who investigated the physical and mental health consequences of job loss. The results indicated that when social support was low, the stress associated with unemployment had adverse effects. High levels of social support on the other hand, protected workers against such harmful effects. Despite these findings Gore has been criticised for not clearly defining the use of the term, social support. House and Wells (1978, cited in Cohen and Wills, 1985) found that social support buffered the effects of stress on ulcers and neurosis more than on other health outcomes. LaRocco, House and French (1980) discovered buffering effects of job stress on mental and

physical health variables (depression, anxiety, somatic complaints) but no evidence to indicate that support buffered job strains (job dissatisfaction, boredom...). Several other recent studies have illustrated buffering effects. Abdel (1982), using 89 managers found that support buffered against job satisfaction but failed to mitigate anxiety. Karasek, Triantis and Chaudhry (1982) analysed the 1972 U.S. Quality of Employment survey data for 1016 male workers and noted about one-half of the tests for the buffer hypothesis were significant. Wells (1982) hypothesized that supportive relations would mediate the relationship between objective job conditions and perceptions of occupational stress. Using a sample of blue-collar workers he found that over one-half of the relationships were moderated by social support. The results from a Dutch study using 1,146 employees from 13 different industrial organisations showed weak buffering effects. The most significant buffering effects, however, were supervisor support on irritation and blood-pressure (Winnubst, Marcelissen and Klieber, 1982). Fleming, Baum, Gisriel and Gatchel (1985) in their comparative study of residents living near power stations, including Three Mile Island nuclear power station, found that support buffered behavioural and psychological strains but had direct effects on somatic distress. Finally Seers, McGee , Serey and Graen (1983) in their study of 104 predominantly female, clerical workers found evidence for both direct and buffering effects but argue that the results are more

consistent with the coping hypothesis.

Evidence for the buffering hypothesis appears inconclusive with studies revealing the effects to be pervasive and selective (Chisholm, Kasl and Mueller, 1986). Many studies have found only one-half of the relationships have been buffered by support and only selected outcome variables have been affected.

One of the earliest challenges to the buffering hypothesis was the work of Pinneau (1976, cited in LaRocco et al, 1980) who noted that buffering effects in previous studies were very selective. The results from his study involving 2,010 men from 23 occupations did not uphold the buffering hypothesis. Instead, support was found to directly reduce perceived job stresses and psychological strains. LaRocco and Jones (1978), using a sample of 3,725 U.S. Navy enlisted men, concluded that there were direct effects of supervisor and co-worker support on both stress and strain. Ganster, Fusilier and Mayes (1986) investigated the effects of support using 326 employees of a large contracting firm. Modest direct effects were discovered with job dissatisfaction having the strongest relation with social support. Blau (1981) in his study of 166 bus operators found direct effects with a strong relationship between support and job dissatisfaction. Chisholm et al (1986) studied workers at Three Mile Island and a comparative site and noted that support had direct effects on stress reactions of employees, even under crisis conditions. Support was also related and had a

greater impact on stress and strain variables than on health outcomes. In recognition of the lack of attention paid to mental health professionals, Jayaratne and Chess (1984) examined the relationship between emotional support and perceived work stress and strain among 553 randomly selected social workers. The results indicated a significant direct relationship between support and work-related strain variables (job satisfaction, burnout).

In summary, research indicates that social support exerts both direct and buffering effects on worker well-being and health. Despite this, there is no discernible pattern apparent in the results and knowledge of how social support works is still limited. However in terms of overall patterns, social support appears to have a favourable and direct impact on workers while the buffering effect remains unclear (Seers et al, 1983). Several reasons for these inconsistent results have been proposed. Researchers have operationalised social support in a number of ways (Seers et al, 1983; Thoits, 1982); the measures used have not been sensitive enough or appropriate for the research questions (Kasl and Wells, 1985); diverse psychological, behavioural and health outcomes have been adopted (Gottlieb, 1983b); and finally, studies have combined data from a diversity of work groups (Kasl and Wells, 1985). In addition, methodological problems have been inherent in studies testing the buffering hypothesis (see Thoits, 1982). Overall, it seems that researchers know very little about how social support works. It is

for this reason that House (1981, p.83) suggests that:

> "The major task for both future research and application is to specify under what conditions, what kinds of social support will have what kinds of effects on stress and health."

This research attempts to contribute to this by focusing on the effects of social support on teachers' job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale. The direct effects of social support are examined rather than possible buffering effects because of the methodological problems and uncertainties surrounding the buffering effects of social support. This research also attempts to discover more detailed information about the nature of social support than is usually gathered from 5-6 item scales, by exploring social support in a qualitative manner.

The Source of Social Support

Studies focusing on social support in the workplace have also examined the source of this support. In particular studies have sought to determine which sources of support are the most important sources of support in reducing stress, improving health or buffering the impact of stress on health. Henderson and Argyle (1985) note that in general, results have shown that job-related stresses and strains are predominantly affected by workplace sources of support although the importance of work support (supervisors, colleagues) varies across work

settings and occupational groups. This section examines the significance of first, work-related sources of support and secondly, nonwork sources of support.

Cherniss (1980) notes that even though the current state of research and theory is complex and confusing, the importance of supervision for morale and motivation remains unchallenged. Studies examining the effects of social support have found supervisor support to have a beneficial impact (Winnubst et al, 1982; Abdel 1982; Chisholm et al 1986; Ganster et al 1986; Wells 1982; Blau 1981). Supervisor support is especially crucial in situations where interactions with co-workers are limited, for example, when workers are mobile or semi-autonomous (House 1981) and where tasks are stressful to workers (Abdel, 1982). However, constraints such as the number of workers supervised, the nature of the supervisory role (time pressures), the relations among workers and the supervisor's attitudes and skills may influence the ability of supervisors to provide support.

Research has also found co-worker support to be significant (LaRocco et al 1980; Blau 1981; LaRocco and Jones 1978; Karasek et al 1982; Seers et al 1983). A supportive group of colleagues is crucial when work is emotionally demanding and when it involves making critical decisions that affect the well-being of others (Payne 1980). Cherniss (1980) suggests that colleagues are able to provide several different types of support. First, discussing problems with colleagues may reduce tensions

and aid understanding. Colleagues are also a source of practical advice, technical information and a source of feedback. Finally, colleagues are an important source of stimulation as well as a resource in times of conflict.

Co-worker support, however, is strongly influenced by the values and structure of an organisation. In particular competitive, evaluative or unequal social relationships are not conducive to supportive relationships (House, 1981). Co-worker support is also influenced or constrained by mistrust, conflict and hostility among individuals and groups (Cherniss, 1980).

At a more general level several factors relating to work organisations affect the level of support available. Very isolated work is detrimental to co-worker and supervisor support while co-operation appears to encourage support. In addition the values and structure of work organisations affect the quality of supportive relations within them (House, 1981).

Individuals outside of work, especially the support of a spouse and friends, can also be effective in reducing stresses and strains. Support from spouse and friends has been shown to influence the impact of work stress. However, as House (1981) notes, the very occupational pressures and tensions that require support to alleviate them or buffer their effects may adversely affect the potential for obtaining support from family and friends. Many of these factors are applicable to teacher social support, although not extensively investigated.

1.3 TEACHERS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

The support extended by teaching colleagues occurs in a context of norms and values within the teaching profession. This section begins by examining the relevant norms and values which influence staff relationships and the giving and receiving of social support. The research linking support to teacher stress and job satisfaction is then explored, followed by a discussion of the support systems within secondary schools. Research focused on teacher support is also outlined in the third section and this leads into the rationale for this research.

The Culture of Teaching

Among these norms and values found in staffrooms there are two concerns which are particularly relevant to social support - the concerns of competence and autonomy. Teachers' concerns over their competence derive from the fact that there are no clear criterion by which teachers can be judged as good or bad. In other words, it is difficult to judge the professional competence of teachers as there is a lack of clear feedback in teaching (Hargreaves, 1982). Each teacher has to determine their own competence as there is a lack of praise and recognition for their work from colleagues or administrators (Webb, 1985). These concerns about competence are, Hargreaves (1982) argues, an expression of a deeper and more basic value within the teaching profession which is the commit-

ment of teachers to classroom autonomy. This autonomy means that many teachers do not like colleagues or other adults in their classroom which Hargreaves (1982) suggests is due to the fact that observers are likely to make evaluations about a teacher and their teaching abilities. However not only does this insulation protect teachers from observation and criticism but also from obtaining the support of others. Although in many schools, teachers are encouraged to ask for help if they have difficulties this immediately exposes the teacher's weaknesses to others. Glidewell, Tucker, Todt and Cox's (1982 cited in Gottlieb 1983b) study of professional norms hindering the expression of support found that the norm of autonomy constrained requests for and offers of professional assistance in a sample of teachers. Altogether this suggests that the professional socialization of teachers influences or proscribes colleagial support seeking and support giving.

Social Support, Stress and Job Satisfaction

Currently very little research has focused exclusively on teachers and social support. Instead, social support has emerged as a relevant variable from studies of teacher stress and job satisfaction.

Research on teacher stress has grown since the late 1970's and much of it has been concerned with identifying sources of stress for teachers. Although one of the dominant areas of stress is discipline problems, lack of support has been identified by a variety of researchers as

a source of stress for classroom teachers.

Poor communication and staff relationships emerged as a stress factor in studies conducted by Sutton (1984), Leach (1984, cited in Thomas 1986), Dunham (1980) and Pratt (1978). Support or wanting the understanding and sustenance of administrators and other teachers was identified as a 'bothersome' factor by Cruickshank, Kennedy and Myers (1978). In addition, relationships with administrators have also been identified as stressful. Tension in relationships with their senior was a major source of anxiety for beginning teachers (Coates and Thorensen, 1976) while poor administrative support was a prominent concern noted by Dworkin, Harvey and Telsihow (1988). Teacher-administrator interactions have been identified by teachers as a stressful aspect of their working environment in studies by Amodio (1981) and Dworkin et al (1988). Dewe (1986) investigated stressful situations in a New Zealand sample of teachers and although colleagial support did not emerge as one of the final stressful situations, lack of support appeared as one of the seven sources of stress during interviewing. Staff relationships (particularly tension between teachers) emerged as one of the main clusters of stress items in Galloway, Panckhurst, Boswell, Boswell and Green's (1982) study of 296 North Island teachers. Roper's (1979) research also identified professional relationships as a source of stress.

Research examining teacher stress has also attempted to determine how teachers cope with stress. One of the

coping strategies most frequently identified has been seeking support from colleagues, usually in the form of talking about stressful problems (Kyriacou, 1981; Dunham 1983). Dewe (1985) explored the coping strategies used by 145 North Island primary school teachers, and utilising colleague support (advice, suggestions, talking over problems) emerged as one of the six coping strategies.

Limited research also exists on the impact of support on burnout. Research conducted by several investigators suggests that support from supervisors is predictive of burnout (Russell, Altmaier and van Velzen, 1987) and teachers who feel supported by others, report fewer signs of burnout (Zabel and Zabel, 1982). Areenich (1982) also noted that teachers' perceptions of more problems in their relationships with administrators, than with students, was one of the indicators of burnout in his study.

Finally, the supportiveness of colleagues and administrators has been identified as an influential factor in teachers' job satisfaction. Poor human relations among staff was the second most frequently mentioned area of dissatisfaction in a study conducted by Rudd and Wiseman (1962). Lack of professional support was one of several reasons for teachers' dissatisfaction in an NZEI survey of Auckland teachers (Chinnery, 1979). Lastly, two studies have showed that most relationships with colleagues are satisfying but one colleague may be a source of dissatisfaction (Holdaway 1978; Galloway, Boswell, Panckhurst, Boswell and Green, 1982). In addition, Galloway et al

note that feelings of overall dissatisfaction tend to be directed at principals, who some teachers felt, provided inadequate support.

Support Systems in the Schools for Teachers

Teaching is often described as a lonely profession as teachers spend much of their day isolated from each other in a room full of 30 children with limited contact with other adults. In addition there is no formal occupational support system. This isolation inherent in the job is seen by some as a reason why many teachers feel stressed, suffer from 'burnout', and why others are leaving the profession (Asp and Garbarino, 1983; Roper, 1979). Social support is seen as a means to reduce this isolation and alleviate the stresses of the job. It is also seen as an indication that teachers are looking more to themselves, colleagues and supervisors to reduce these problems.

Dunham (1977) and Cox (1977) (both cited in Kyriacou, 1980) were two of the earliest researchers to recognise and express the need to improve social support in school settings. In addition in Dunham's (1980) comparative study of English and German teachers, teachers' recommendations for reducing stress included better communications between teachers and more support in teaching disruptive pupils. Teachers also called for adequate support from senior teachers and colleagues so that teachers could feel free to talk about their problems and develop new skills.

Kyriacou (1981) outlines three main benefits of

social support. First, teachers may receive information from colleagues which may help them to deal with stress and solve problems. Second, discussing problems and concerns with other teachers allows the teacher to analyse the problem and place it in perspective as well as providing self-assurance. Finally, social interactions with colleagues allow the release of tension. Moracco and McFadden (1982) note that support from colleagues can also provide feedback, allow for the sharing of ideas, and meet needs for belonging and self-esteem. Kyriacou (1981) notes that much of the responsibility for improving social support and developing the appropriate atmosphere of openness and mutual trust where teachers feel able to talk to others, lies with the head. Investigators have also noted the benefits of support groups and there have been calls for the introduction of these within schools as a means to support teachers (Gamby, Cunningham, Nipert, 1984; Moracco and McFadden, 1982).

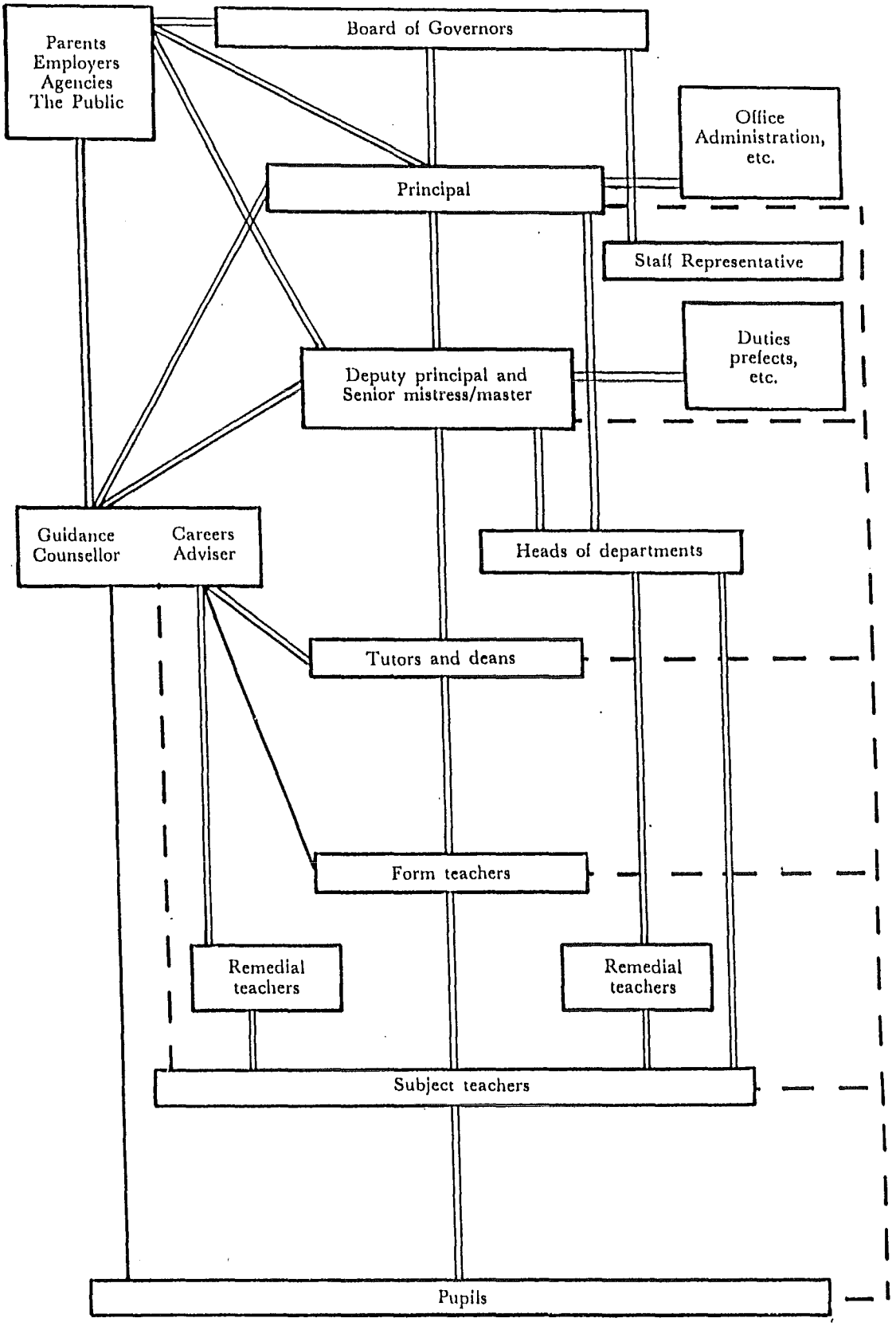
Despite the potential that social support has within schools, the evidence suggests that the support given to teachers varies enormously between schools. Taylor and Scotti (1987) observed wide variations in the help given to List A teachers in New Zealand. Galloway, Ball, Blomfield and Seyd (1982) in their study of disruptive behaviour in secondary schools also examined support for staff in dealing with disruptive behaviour. Some schools adopted the policy of referring problem students upwards (to senior staff - tutor, HOD, Dean), while other schools

preferred to refer problems sideways or downwards in an attempt to ensure problems did not escalate (see Figure 2). This latter approach meant that teachers were expected to deal with the problem themself with senior staff seeing their job as helping colleagues deal with problems by themself (Galloway 1985). The researchers noticed, in contrast that upward referrals resulted in teachers losing confidence, feeling incompetent and their morale appeared to suffer.

A minimal amount of research has actually been conducted on the supportiveness of colleagues. Fimian and Santoro (1982) investigated the sources of stress for special education teachers but also discovered that approximately 80 percent of the teachers sampled, reported giving and receiving colleague support on a regular basis. However only 22 percent reported giving or receiving support from administrators. Sutton (1984) studied job stress among 200 primary and secondary school teachers and found that coworker support was not significantly related to any of the three strains examined while the results provided inconclusive evidence about the importance of supervisor support. Finally, Fimian (1986) assessed stress levels, supervisory and coworker support in three groups of special education teachers. Only 30-40 percent of respondents reported receiving support from supervisors in comparison to 90 percent who reported receiving support from colleagues. Approximately 30 percent reported receiving support from both sources and only 10 percent

FIGURE 2

The lines of communication, reference and referral in a secondary school



Key

= communication

----- = referral

_____ = reference

(taken from State Secondary Schools in New Zealand, 1981)

from neither source (these figures are consistent with Farber (1981) and Instructor's (1977) survey cited in Fimian (1986)). Although this indicates that teachers are more likely to receive support from colleagues than from supervisors, additional evidence illustrated that supervisor support moderated stress. Teachers without the support of their supervisor experienced significantly stronger Personal/Professional Stressors, Professional Distress, Discipline and Motivation Problems, and Emotional and Physiological-Fatigue manifestations. Teachers without colleague support reported significantly stronger Professional Distress and significantly stronger and more frequent stressful events. This study, however, failed to define social support and did not examine the quality, nature or types of support available to teachers.

In summary, teachers experience isolation and appear to lack an occupational support system. In addition an increasing number of researchers argue that social support can help teachers cope with stress and be useful in preventing burnout (Moracco and McFadden, 1982; Russell et al, 1981). Only limited research exists on teacher support and is primarily concerned with the sources of that support despite the fact that it is a concern that is discussed in teaching journals.

This exploratory research attempts to investigate the nature and effects of social support among secondary school teachers in Christchurch. Very little is known about 'natural' social support and so this study explores

teachers' support networks, their perceptions of support, the behaviours extended and the influences on this support The main effects of social support on job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale are also explored. These variables were chosen because support has been found to have more consistent effects on behavioural than on health variables (Chisholm et al 1986; Jayaratne and Chess 1984; House 1981) and also because they emerged as frequently mentioned variables during exploratory interviews. A description of how this research was conducted is contained in the next chapter.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the sample of teachers who were interviewed, the research procedure adopted and, lastly, a description of the research instruments used.

2.1 SAMPLE

Seventy-five secondary school teachers were interviewed from a range of teaching positions. They were chosen to gain an understanding of the different perspectives that teachers may have of social support, and to enable comparisons between people in different positions. The number of teachers interviewed was based on the sample size necessary for crosstabulation and multiple regression analysis. The composition of the sample with respect to teaching position is shown in Table 1, which is organised by seniority.

Table 1 indicates that over one-half of the sample consisted of assistant teachers, although three had previously been a head of department. There was a slight sex bias in relation to teaching position with more females than males in the two junior categories and fewer females than males in positions of responsibility. For the purpose of analysis, because of the small numbers of respondents in a position of responsibility, heads of department, senior masters or mistresses and deputy principals, these positions were combined into one category of holding official responsibilities.

Table 1

Composition of the sample by teaching position and gender

Teaching Position	Number of teachers	Number of male teachers	Number of female teachers
List A	14	5	9
Assistant teacher	41	17	24
Position of responsibility (PR)	7	5	2
Head of Department (HOD)	9	6	3
Senior master/mistress (SM)	2	1	1
Deputy Principal (DP)	2	2	0
TOTAL	75	36	39

KEY

List A = probationary teacher (usually for 2 years), entitled to receive advice and guidance.

Assistant = certificated teachers.

Position of responsibility = teachers who carry out extra responsibilities (for example, timetabling).

Head of Department = responsible for all the teachers who teach a particular subject in the school.

Senior master/mistress = part of management team, limited teaching duties.

Deputy Principal = part of management team, limited teaching duties.

Respondents represented a wide range of subject areas, with varying ages and levels of teaching experience. The sole selection criterion was that the respondent currently performed some teaching duties. Only one respondent who was interviewed was not currently teaching but he was included because of his relevance as he was part of the school's support structure.

Teachers were interviewed from 20 secondary schools within the greater Christchurch metropolitan area. Seven of these were private schools, with the remaining 12 schools being state schools. One teacher was interviewed from 10 of the schools, between 2 and 7 teachers were interviewed from 7 schools while 10 to 13 teachers were interviewed from the remaining 3 schools.

2.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Three stages were involved in the research procedure. First, initial exploratory interviews were conducted with a sample of five teachers known to the researcher. The purpose of these preliminary interviews was to develop ideas about the appropriateness and format of the open-ended questions in the interview schedule. Interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and were mostly conducted in the respondent's home during the Easter school break.

In the second stage, a separate sample of four teachers participated in the pretesting of the interview schedule. Pretesting was conducted to determine the comprehension of the items and the time taken to complete the interview. Only minor adjustments were required and the average completion time was 40-45 minutes. In addition, two other teachers critically examined a copy of the interview schedule to check the clarity of the questions.

The third stage represented the data collection stage. Two different non-probability sampling methods were used. These were 'snowballing' and 'volunteer' sampling. This

enabled the researcher to sample a range of schools in addition to examining several schools and the influence of their school 'climate' in more detail. This is similar to the procedure used by Galloway, Panckhurst and Boswell (1982).

The snowballing technique relies on an initial few respondents and their own contacts who are relayed to the researcher. The procedure enabled a range of schools to be sampled, interviews to be conducted during school holidays and also the involvement of teachers who may have been less likely to volunteer because of, for example, a heavy workload. Teachers were contacted by telephone and the nature of the research project was outlined. One teacher declined to participate as she was too busy, and felt it would be necessary to obtain permission from her principal to participate. A second person who was contacted agreed to participate but did not keep the appointment and could not be recontacted. Three other respondents forgot to meet with the researcher but alternative times were arranged. The total number of teachers who were interviewed using this method was 26, a response rate of 96 percent.

Interviews typically took place in the respondent's home and occasionally at Canterbury University or the respondent's school. Interviews lasted longer, approximately 1 hour due to the more relaxed atmosphere and reduced time pressure of being in the respondent's home.

The second method of recruiting teachers involved approaching principals and working through the schools.

Decisions concerning which schools to approach were based on the nature and location of the school (for example state versus private). In addition two principals suggested other principals who they thought would be interested in the study.

Eight principals were contacted by telephone and an appointment was arranged to discuss the study, for all except one principal. One of the principals who was approached decided it was necessary to consult with senior staff and due to the particular situation at the school, decided it would be insensitive to interview staff at that time. All of the principals expressed interest in the study with several stating explicitly that they had agreed to participate because of the nature of the research and the useful and relevant information that it would generate for them.

At three of the seven schools, the principal discussed the study with the staff and either asked for volunteers or asked specific individuals from certain positions to participate. At the remaining four schools the researcher explained to the staff during their staff meeting the nature of the research and what would be involved if they participated.

Six to ten volunteers were requested from each school. Quotas were obtained from five of the seven schools. Eight additional teachers from several of the schools expressed interest in the study but were unable to participate because of time constraints.

This method yielded a total of 50 respondents although one interview was discarded because inadequate information was provided by the respondent. Thirty-four (69 percent) of this group were volunteers who constituted 45 percent of the total sample.

Interviews were conducted either in the schools during the day in non-teaching time, at lunchtime or after school, or occasionally in the weekends or evenings. The average time of interviews was the expected 40-45 minutes with interviews conducted in places such as tutor's offices or empty classrooms.

The overall response of most teachers was one of interest and enthusiasm, particularly in the study's anticipated results. A number of teachers stated they thought it was 'good' or 'about time' that someone was researching social support among teachers. Some teachers stated that they volunteered because of their own interest, experiences or involvement in the school's support system.

After the results had been analysed a letter of appreciation and summary of results was sent to all the teachers who had participated (see Appendix E). A more detailed report was sent to the principals who supported this study (see Appendix D).

2.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Data for the study was gathered using a twelve-page interview schedule containing four sections (see copy in Appendix A). The first section consisted of questions

devised by the researcher, about the respondent and their teaching experience. Pretesting revealed that the coding of several of the questions required broadening. The next section broadly titled attitudes toward teaching position, contained instruments measuring job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale. Following this was the third section which was the first of two sections measuring social support and included the Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule (ASSIS). The final section was composed of open-ended questions probing the nature of support among teachers. These last three sections containing research instruments will now be outlined in more detail.

Attitudes Toward Teaching Position

Job Satisfaction

Warr, Cook and Wall's fifteen item scale of overall job satisfaction, covering both extrinsic and intrinsic job features was used to measure job satisfaction (cited in Cook, Hepworth, Wall and Warr, 1981). Respondents were required to indicate on a 7-point dimension either their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each of the 15 features of the job (for example, your opportunity to use your abilities). The values for each item were then combined into a total score representing overall satisfaction (ranging from 15 to 105). The reported reliability and norms of this recently developed scale are good. (British Telecom Survey Item Bank, 1981).

Items were modified to the school context, for example 'firm' was changed to 'school'. Although the scale worked satisfactorily most of the time, problems arose occasionally, for example, when a respondent had two heads of department and scores had to be averaged out.

An extra question from Hoppock's (1935) questionnaire was placed at the conclusion of the job satisfaction scale. This question was included to gain an indication of the representativeness of the respondent's feelings (mood) regarding their job satisfaction.

Intention to Leave their Current Position

A three-item index from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire measured employees' intentions to leave their present job. Responses to the intention to leave scale were made on one of two 7-point dimensions indicating the strength of agreement or disagreement with the item (for example, "I often think about quitting"). The Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire was designed to obtain information about the respondent's job and work environment and their attitudes and perceptions (Seashore, Lawler, Mirvis and Gortlandt, 1983). Scales and their items were developed from empirical analysis and administered to several thousand employees from a variety of organisations. Although the scale has high internal reliability (Cook et al, 1981), respondents sometimes found the similarity between the first and third questions frustrating as they felt they had already answered the question.

Morale

Morale was measured by Bradburn's 1969 Scale (Warr, 1978). The scale consists of five items totalled to yield an index of positive morale and five different items summed to yield an index of negative morale (for example, "during the last few weeks did you ever feel very lonely or remote from other teaching colleagues?"). The wording of several items were modified to make them appropriate to the school context, for example 'someone' was changed to 'colleague'.

Although Bradburn's arguments that positive and negative morale are independent, and his scale have received considerable criticism, other methods and methodologies have recently confirmed the independence of positive and negative morale (Diener, 1984). The scale has good reliability, it has been shown to relate to other variables (Warr, 1978) and proved to be the most applicable morale scale available for this study.

ASSIS-Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule

The ASSIS was developed by Barrera (1981) and consists of a structured interview which assesses both support networks and peoples' feelings about their social support resources. The ASSIS identifies support network members by asking the respondent to name people who serve supportive functions. More specifically, the respondent is asked to identify individuals who have provided different types of support (for example information, feedback) over the last month. For each of the five types of support, four vari-

ables are derived; the social support available (who the respondent said they could turn to or who would help them); the actual support given (who had actually supported the respondent); the respondent's need for support; and satisfaction with support. These responses are then totalled to yield sum scores for each of the four variables. Total actual network size consists of the number of individuals who provided at least one type of support. In order to understand the respondent's support network, respondents were also asked to give the position and gender of each of the people named.

In recognition of the fact that interpersonal relations can be stressful as well as supportive, the ASSIS incorporates several questions relating to conflictual interpersonal relations. Individuals are identified who are perceived by the respondent solely as potential sources of conflict and individuals who actually have been a source of conflict over the preceding month. Also identified are 'conflictual supporters' or individuals who function as supporters at one particular time but are also a source of stress at other times.

Despite the fact that social support normally occurs between individuals in an ongoing relationship, reciprocity has been a somewhat neglected aspect. A question was included about reciprocity to determine who the respondent had supported during the past month. Research has shown that norms of equity and reciprocity mean that individuals should repay the support they have received as otherwise an

imbalance occurs in the exchange. However an inability to reciprocate may result in an unwillingness to seek and accept help as individuals become indebted to others (Schumaker and Brownell, 1984). This, however, may not always be the case with teachers because relationships are hierarchical and therefore teachers may be more likely and able to help others who are 'equal' or 'junior' to them and less likely or able to help those who are their seniors.

The format of the ASSIS used was the modified version adapted by Thomas, O'Driscoll and Robertson (1984). Five categories of support were included - material aid and assistance, sharing personal feelings (emotional support), advice and information, feedback and guidance and, finally, social participation. The decision to include these categories was based on the four components of support contained in House's (1981) definition. The additional category of social participation was incorporated because pretesting, and indeed subsequent interviews, showed social participation to be an important avenue of support for many teachers.

Overall the ASSIS appeared to function well, but in some situations, such as when an individual had a large support network, it proved tedious. Scores from the satisfaction with support scale did not cover different types of supporters, instead respondents had to 'even out' their satisfaction with the support they had received which may be the reason why scores were high. Tardy (1985) notes that although the scale's overall reliability is high, the satisfaction scales tend to favour high scores and have lower

reliabilities. The ASSIS also provided a good introduction as often respondents thought about situations and elaborated on them in the open-ended questions.

Open-Ended Social Support Questions

The final section of the interview schedule explored the nature of social support in the schools and among teachers. The nine questions asked originated from four central questions.

1. What is effective social support?

Teachers were asked to outline specific behaviours of others which they had found to be the most supportive and most unsupportive behaviours over the previous term. Schumaker and Brownell (1984) state that a behaviour is viewed as supportive or helpful by both the recipient and provider when there is a match between the perceived needs of the recipient and the provider's response to those needs. There may be occasions, however, when actions, although intended to be supportive, may not fit the recipient's needs and have negative effects such as increasing stress or promoting dependence. This information was asked to determine how social support influenced well-being and also for its usefulness in interventions designed to enhance support.

2. How adequate is the social support teachers receive?

To investigate the adequacy of social support a critical incident technique was used. This involved teachers recalling any situations in the previous term in which

they felt they had lacked support. Respondents were encouraged to expand on these situations in order to discover in what sorts of areas support was lacking.

These first two questions were based on research conducted by Dunkel-Schetter (1984) on social support as a resource to cancer patients and also from discussions with teachers.

3. What influences social support?

A cluster of four questions sought to examine the influence of other variables on support, an aspect which according to Shinn, Lehman and Wong (1984) has been ignored. Shinn et al outline four such influences - stressors, psychological distress (not explored in this study), personal characteristics of recipients and environmental conditions.

Both ongoing stressful conditions (for example heavy workload) and specific stresses (for example exam marking) may decrease the available support. In addition the availability of support and the ability of members to provide support may vary when an entire support network experiences the same stress (see Eckenrode and Gore, 1981).

Personal characteristics (for example age, sex, mental health status, values and beliefs about utilizing support) may also limit the availability of support. The effect of stressors and personal characteristics are explored broadly from the position of the respondent giving reasons for firstly, why others were not supportive and then reasons for

why they themselves were not supportive of others.

The utilization of support resources was examined by asking the respondent specifically what, if anything, prevented them from seeking support from others. This refers to individuals who may have adequate support but may be unwilling to utilize their support resources. Tolsdorf (1976) introduced the concept of network orientation and stated that individuals have different 'orientations' toward their support resources. More specifically a network orientation refers to:

> "A set of beliefs, attitudes and expectations concerning the potential usefulness of his network members in helping him cope with a life problem." (Tolsdorf, 1976, p.413).

The reasons for an individual's reluctance to draw on support resources have been varied and include experiences with an overloaded or ineffective support network, personality characteristics (for example self-reliance) and fear of stigma. (Tolsdorf, 1976; Vaux, Burda and Stewart, 1986).

Finally to take into account the 'climate' and physical environment in which support occurs, a question asked the respondent to specify the particular aspects of their school's environment which encouraged or discouraged support. Although aspects of the environment may influence the interactions among network members and the development and utilization of support resources, not a great deal is known about what makes some work environments more support-

ive than others (House, 1981).

4. How can social support be improved in schools?

Teachers were asked if they thought social support needed to be improved in their particular school and if so, what recommendations they had to improve it.

These last two groups of questions developed from discussions with teachers and also from an examination of the social support literature.

With the consent of the respondents, replies to the open-ended questions were tape-recorded. This did not appear to interfere with their responses. A coding scheme for each of the nine questions was drawn up by reviewing the replies of all 75 respondents. These were then categorized, a technique recommended by Babbie (1979). A coding reliability check was carried out by an independent coder who checked a random number of respondents' answers against the coding categories arriving at high inter-rater reliability (86 percent agreement). When there was disagreement, the researcher decided on the appropriate category.

Data from the other three sections were computer analysed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) frequency, crosstabulation, Pearson's **r** correlation and multiple regression programs. Subprogram Frequencies was used to obtain the frequency of each response for every variable. The frequency distribution of two or three selected variables was compared using cross-tabulation analysis. Pearson's **r** correlation measured how

strongly related a pair of variables were while multiple regression was utilised to predict teachers' job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position and morale. The results of these analyses are reported in Chapter Three.

RESULTS

The aim of the research was to explore the social support among teachers, their support networks, and the effects of social support. The results of this study are presented in four major sections. The first section (3.1) presents additional information obtained from the respondents about themselves and their teaching careers. The next section (3.2) explores various aspects of these teachers' support networks and their perceptions of support. This is followed by the third section (3.3) which examines the effects of support on job satisfaction, intention to leave their present job and morale. Finally, the nature of support among teachers is discussed in the last section (3.4) which draws from the open-ended section of the interview schedule.

3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

This section explores the characteristics of the teachers and their teaching careers, beginning with the number of years at their current school.

Over one-half (45) of the teachers had been at their present school for 5 or fewer years. This compares with 12 who had been at their current school for between 5 and 10 years and 18 teachers who had taught at their school for 10 years or more.

In terms of teaching duties over one-half of the sample (41) taught the usual five or six classes per week. Sixteen teachers had four classes, while eight

teachers taught three or fewer classes. In contrast, ten teachers had seven classes or more. The distribution of class levels was relatively even, although only a few teachers had classes at the Form 1 and Form 2 levels.

Table 2 displays the number of respondents who taught one or more classes per week in the subject areas outlined. Most of the sample taught at least one class in the four main subject areas of maths and computing (21), english (18), social studies (17) and science (12). The next largest group of teachers took social education topics such as life skills and transition. The remaining teachers taught a variety of subjects ranging from art to economics to horticulture.

Even though the mean number of years teaching full-time was 9.7, teaching experience levels varied considerably from 3 months to 33 years. Table 3 illustrates that nearly one-half of the sample had 7 or fewer years teaching experience. Of the more experienced half who had taught for 7 years or more, most of these (18) had taught for between 8 and 17 years. Fourteen teachers had or were teaching part-time over a span of 2 to 14 years.

TABLE 2

Range of Subjects Taught by the Sample

Subject	Number of teachers
Art (practical and history)	4
Commerce (accounting, economics, computer keyboarding and typing)	6
Classical studies	2
English	18
Home economics and clothing	5
Horticulture	2
Languages (French and Japanese)	4
Maths and computing	21
Metalwork, woodwork, workshop transition, technical drawing, electronics	2
Music	1
Physical education	1
Science, biology, chemistry, physics	12
Social studies, geography, history	17
Social education, transition, civics, life skills, contemporary studies	11
Miscellaneous - including remedial english, religious studies	10

TABLE 3

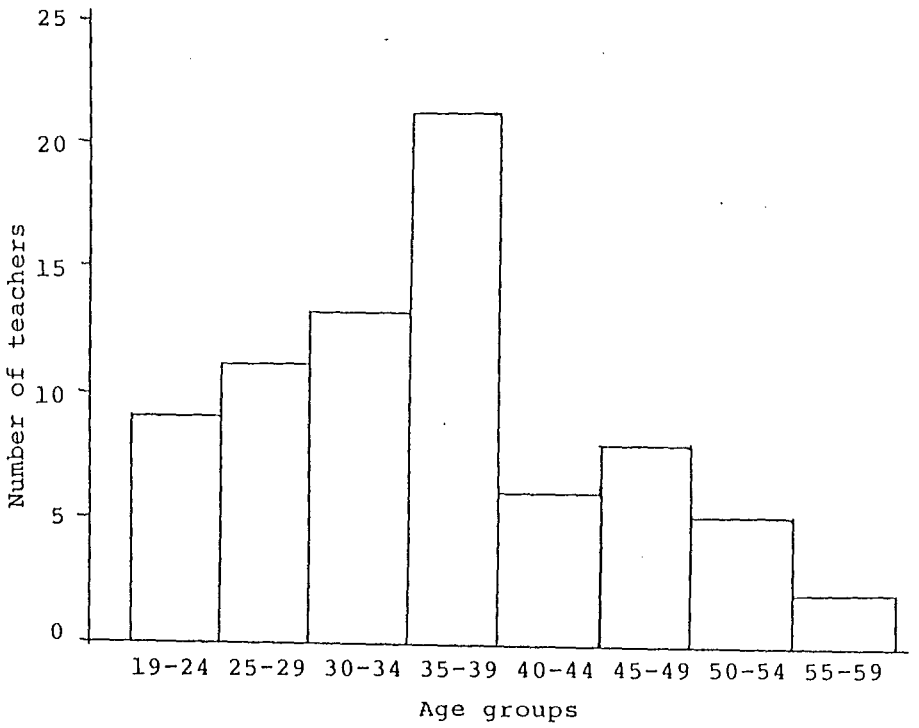
Levels of Teaching Experience

Full-time years teaching	Number of teachers
0-2	17
3-7	19
8-12	7
13-17	11
18-24	7
25-33	5

The educational level of the teachers was very high as illustrated by the fact that 65 of the teachers (87 percent) had a university degree. Of these 65, 18 held a postgraduate qualification. The remaining 10 teachers had a variety of qualifications such as technical institute diplomas and certificates (for example a commerce teachers' diploma).

Ages of the teachers interviewed, ranged from 20 years to nearly 60 years. Over 70 percent of the sample were between the ages of 19 and 39 while the largest age group was the 35-39 age group as shown by figure 3.

FIGURE 3 Age of the Teachers



The majority of teachers (50) were married. The remaining respondents were either separated or divorced (7), involved in a defacto relationship (3) or single (15). Seven of the teachers who were married had partners

who were also teachers but for many of the teachers (18) their partners were professional workers (for example engineer, nurse, social worker). Forty-three teachers had from one to six children of varying ages.

Job Satisfaction

Teachers' satisfaction with their job ranged widely from the least satisfied score of 41 to the highest score of 94. The mean job satisfaction score of the teachers was 72.1 which is comparable with other studies (British Telecom Survey Item Bank, 1981). Most respondents (53), rated their job satisfaction between 64 and 84 indicating a moderate-high level of job satisfaction. Despite this, a noticeable proportion (15) scored less than 64 implying a moderate-low level of satisfaction. One teacher commented:

> "What used to be a satisfying job is no more and a lot of people are getting disillusioned because of the workload, the extra demands placed on us and the attitudes of parents and kids."

Another echoed this statement:

> "Over the last few years, I've become more dissatisfied with teaching because of changes in the curriculum, changes in kids and the extra demands and I want a break."

Seventy-two respondents stated that their responses were an accurate indication of how they usually felt about their job. The remaining three stated sickness,

holiday time and changes within the school as reasons which influenced their replies.

Correlation analysis was used to determine which variables were associated with teachers' overall job satisfaction and the strength of the association. Gender, age and teaching position were examined but only teaching position was significantly related to job satisfaction ($r = 0.21, p < 0.05$). Approximately 20 percent of all three teaching groups rated their job satisfaction as low. However 40 percent of position of responsibility (PR) holders indicated high levels of job satisfaction compared with 12 percent of assistant teachers and no list A teachers. This indicates that although there were similar proportions of dissatisfied PR holders, assistant and list A teachers, a larger proportion of PR holders were highly satisfied. Possible reasons for this include the lower teaching load of PR's and the possibility that dissatisfied PR's have left teaching.

Satisfaction scores for each of the scale's 15 items were also analysed. Teachers were most satisfied with the freedom to choose their own method of working (95 percent satisfied), the amount of responsibility they were given (86 percent satisfied) and the amount of variety in their job (85 percent satisfied). Approximately 70 percent of teachers were also satisfied with their colleagues, HOD, job security, pay and opportunities to use their abilities. A lower proportion of teachers, about 60 percent, were satisfied with the recognition

they received for good work, the way their school is administered, the attention paid to suggestions they make and their hours of work. The items which teachers were the least satisfied with were 'industrial relations between the teacher's union and your employer' (28 percent satisfied) and 'your chance of promotion' (40 percent satisfied). A teacher explained his dissatisfaction with promotional opportunities:

> "Staff in Christchurch are generally conservative and stable and the opportunities for promotion are limited, the quality of teaching in Christchurch is high."

Three significant relationships were found between gender and job satisfaction items using correlation analysis. Female teachers were more satisfied with their pay than male teachers ($r = 0.40$, $p < 0.005$). Seventy-five percent of females compared with 25 percent of males stated that they were either very satisfied or extremely satisfied with their pay. Second, a higher percentage of males (66 percent) than females (39 percent) were dissatisfied with current industrial relations ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$). Finally, females were less satisfied and more unsure of the attention paid to suggestions they made ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$). Fifty-six percent of females compared with 69 percent of males were satisfied with the attention paid to suggestions they made while 18 percent of females and 5 percent of males were unsure.

A significant association was found between teaching position and teachers' satisfaction with the amount of

responsibility given ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$). PR holders were the most satisfied with 85 percent stating they were either very or extremely satisfied with the amount of responsibility they were given, compared with 54 percent of assistant teachers and 28 percent of list A teachers.

Overall, the majority of teachers indicated moderate to high levels of job satisfaction although a significant proportion were less satisfied. A greater proportion of PR holders were more satisfied with their job than list A and assistant teachers.

Intention to Leave their Present Position

Teachers' intentions to leave their present position were classified on the basis of their scores and also the reasons they gave for wanting to leave. Teachers with high intentions to leave their present job scored in the top third of all the respondents and showed evidence of a definite plan to leave within the next couple of years. Nearly one-quarter (20) of the sample were classified as having high intentions to leave their current position. The remainder either had no intentions to leave or otherwise wanted to leave but could not or had not formed any serious plans for the next few years. Although it is difficult to determine the extent of this latter group the indications are that it is sizeable. One assistant teacher explained:

> "I think if you ask a lot of teachers, you'll find they are thinking of leaving. A lot of them think about it, a lot of them haven't

> got the courage or the opportunity to do so but I don't think it's very far from many teachers' minds."

Teachers' intentions of leaving their present position were associated with the gender of the teacher ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$). The majority of female teachers (67 percent) illustrated low to moderate leaving intentions with only 15 percent of female teachers having high intentions of leaving. Male teachers on the other hand, were split between those with low to moderate leaving intentions (45 percent) and those scoring very highly 44 percent). This indicates that a lower proportion of females are likely to leave while male teachers are divided between those unlikely and those very likely to leave. A possible reason for this may be that most men are the primary wage earner for a family and are bound to stay in a career for a considerable part of their lives. They therefore, may be exposed to the pressures of teaching for longer than most women, creating opportunity for dissatisfaction with teaching to arise.

Teachers' reasons for intending to leave included both personal reasons (for example wanting to travel) and also reasons related to teaching. Five teachers mentioned a need for a new challenge as a motivating factor. An assistant teacher commented:

> "You can only be a teacher for so long ... I've been here for 12 years and that's far too long and you might be happy in the place but really for the challenge you've got to

move..."

Seven teachers related their reasons to frustrations or dissatisfactions with the job itself:

> "I am more and more looking for something else. I find it an emotionally draining job."
>
> "I would like to get out of teaching ... it's the pressure of the system ... there aren't many obvious immediate rewards in teaching."

A small proportion of the teachers who showed high intentions to leave wanted to remain in the education system, but many felt that the returns were better elsewhere.

> "I'm thinking of leaving because I feel I'm working very hard and I feel that I'm not getting the salary for the work I do - I have business skills - and the feeling that you just can't get away from the job."
>
> "If I put the same amount of time into a business I'd be better off and get better returns."

Morale

An analysis of the morale scale revealed two separate patterns of morale levels. Scores from the positive morale scale (see Table 4) showed that the majority of teachers (68) experienced moderate to high levels of positive morale or well-being. In contrast levels of negative or poor morale were more dispersed. Only 15

TABLE 4

Morale Levels of the Teachers

	value	Number of teachers positive morale	Number of teachers negative morale
	0	1	15
low	1	2	17
	2	4	16
	3	14	18
high	4	23	8
	5	31	1

teachers reported the absence of negative morale while the majority showed low to moderate levels of negative morale. Nine teachers reported high negative morale. An assistant teacher commented on the situation at her school:

> "There's a real negativeness in terms of staff morale, it's very low, people tend to turn off and not listen..."

Overall then, the level of positive morale among teachers was moderate to high but there was also a low to moderate level of negative morale present.

3.2 TEACHERS' SUPPORT NETWORKS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SUPPORT

This section of the results is divided into two main parts. First, teachers' overall support networks are examined in terms of their (1) characteristics (size, reciprocal and conflictual relationships), (2) composition, and (3) teacher perceptions of support which includes their satisfaction and need for support. The second half of this section explores the characteristics (size), composition and perceptions of the different support-type networks (for example emotional support).

Teachers' Overall Support Networks

Characteristics of teachers' support networks

The number of people available to support a particular teacher, that is 'potential supporters', showed considerable variation. At one extreme two teachers stated that they would feel able to go to or would be helped by only eight people while at the opposite end, one teacher named 45 people. Despite the extremes the average number of potential supporters was 22 with only 12 teachers having 15 or fewer potential supporters. The number of potential supporters was sometimes swelled by non-teaching friends who were supportive socially. The measure of actual supporters excluded such people who were supportive only in a social capacity and were not supportive of the individual in their teaching role. The

number of actual supporters will be focused on unless mentioned otherwise.

As anticipated the number of people who actually supported teachers was smaller than the number of potential supporters. Again extremes were evident with the smallest network consisting of three supporters and the largest of 30. One-third of the sample (25) named between three and nine actual supporters while the average number of supporters was 13.

Teaching experience levels emerged as an important variable as teachers who had a greater number of years full-time teaching also had a larger number of actual supporters ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.005$). Thirty-five percent of teachers who had been teaching for less than 2 years named a small number of supporters (between 3 and 9) compared with only 7 percent of teachers who had taught for 13 years or more. This may be because more experienced teachers have had contact with larger numbers of teachers.

The size of an individual's support network was also associated with their satisfaction with support ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$). This association, however, was not particularly strong indicating that a larger number of supporters does not automatically imply greater satisfaction with support. Instead the size of the individual's support network was sometimes due to the individual's choice and at other times it represented the amount of support available, because, for example, the size of their department.

The number of reciprocal relationships or relationships where two teachers supported each other varied from zero to 11. Six teachers stated they were involved in no reciprocal relationships while 42 (56 percent) indicated the existence of between one and four reciprocal relationships in their support networks. An overwhelming majority of teachers (67) named one or more assistant teachers as a reciprocal partner. PR holders and their own HOD were named by 17 and 16 teachers respectively. Thirteen and 10 teachers respectively, outlined reciprocal relationships with school staff members and 'educational advisers' (for example, teachers at different schools). Finally only six and five teachers respectively stated they had a reciprocal relationship with the DP and principal. This evidence together with the moderate correlation between teaching experience levels and the number of reciprocal relationships ($r = 0.43, p < 0.000$) suggests that the more experienced the teacher, the more s/he is able and expected to help others as well as receiving help themself. In particular teachers are most likely and able to help those junior or equal to them, excluding their immediate senior who teachers are generally expected to support.

Fifty-three teachers reported between one and nine people who they perceived as potential sources of conflict while 40 teachers named between one and four people who had been actual sources of conflict. Assistant teachers emerged as the most frequent source of conflict with 23 teachers naming at least one assistant teacher. The next

largest group were principals who were named by 12 teachers followed by PR holders and then the teacher's own HOD. Others mentioned, although by fewer than five people, included the DP, other HOD's, SM, office staff, students and the Government.

Correlation analysis revealed the number of actual conflict sources was related to the number of years the teacher had taught at the school ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers who had taught at the school for a greater number of years had a higher number of people who were sources of conflict than newer staff members. This together with prior evidence suggests that over time both supportive as well as conflictual relationships are formed.

Only nine respondents reported the existence of conflictual supporters or individuals who provide both support and conflict. Five conflictual supporters were the respondent's HOD, three were their principal, and the remaining one was an assistant teacher. This somewhat low number of conflictual supporters may be due to the fact that teachers often stated that if they disliked or did not 'get on' with someone then the staffroom was usually a large enough place for them to avoid the particular teacher. Conflictual supporters, however were individuals who respondents were in close contact with and generally could not avoid.

Composition of teachers' support networks

The issue of who provides teachers with social support was explored by examining the composition of their

support networks. The principal and deputy principal were each mentioned by approximately one-third of the sample as actual supporters. PR holders were named as supporters by two-thirds of teachers with Deans and tutors given a particular mention. Fifty-seven respondents named their HOD or senior as a source of support. This illustrates the important role that HOD's play in supporting teachers although it appears that assistant teachers may be equally if not more important. Seventy-one teachers outlined between one and 15 assistant teachers as a source of support. Often the assistant teachers outlined were teachers from the same department, teachers of the same class or of a similar age. An assistant teacher noted:

> "I think often the people at the school who have the titles and time to give help, often don't give it effectively because they're run off their feet, often they're not the people I would go to for help... the people you feel closest to have similar problems or you teach the same class with. Sometimes you feel you can sort it out yourself or go to a friend... often it's an assistant teacher of a similar age."

In situations where support from teachers in their department and/or school was inadequate or insufficient an additional source was teachers from other schools. Over one-third of the teachers (32) named 'educational advisers', outside of their school as sources of support.

Most commonly this took the form of teachers from previous schools or teacher-contacts at different schools. Teaching associations, teachers' college lecturers and department of education inspectors were also recognised as supportive.

School staff were present in 38 teachers' support networks with the guidance counsellor mentioned foremost by 22 respondents. Also named were technicians, librarians, careers advisory officers, office staff, health nurses, executive officers, teacher's aids, ancillary helpers, groundsmen and caretakers. This illustrates that a wide range of school staff, although not teachers themselves are considered supportive by staff at the school.

The last important source of support was from family members. In particular teachers' partners were mentioned as supportive by 32 teachers. Interestingly equal numbers of male and female teachers included their partner in their support networks. However four times as many female respondents as male respondents named their children and other family members (for example mother, sister-in-law) as a source of support.

Differences in the gender proportions of teachers in male and female respondents' support networks proved difficult to determine. The proportion of males and females named as supportive depended not only on the individual's preferences, but also on the balance of the sexes within the teacher's subject department and school. In addition the gender bias in relation to teaching

position outlined earlier, complicated the issue. The existence of women's groups in several schools and the stated preference to seek support, particularly emotional support, from female teachers by some female and a few male teachers indicated the existence of differences which need to be explored. One female teacher commented:

> "... men don't like to say a lot to each other but they're pretty good at opening up to women teachers."

An important avenue of support for some male teachers was social activities such as going to the pub as this provided them with an acceptable opportunity to confide in others. A male teacher explained:

> "... probably the area of most contact is sports, where we can go down for a beer on a Friday afternoon and once you get past the sports talk you can start opening up and talking and I've found that's a very good area of social support."

Teachers' perceptions of support

Teachers' satisfaction with the support they received ranged from 9 to 25 on a 1 to 25 scale. Nine teachers rated their satisfaction less than 15 while most teachers (41) rated their satisfaction between 16 and 20. The remaining 25 rated their satisfaction between 21 and 25. This indicates that although a small proportion of teachers were dissatisfied with their support, most were satisfied and one-quarter were very satisfied with the support they received.

Teachers rated their need for support on a 1 to 21 scale. Nine teachers rated their need for support between 7 and 10 while most respondents scored between 11 and 16 and the remaining 12, between 17 and 21. Overall, only a few teachers stated they had low needs for support. Most indicated a moderate need with the remaining few needing a lot of support.

Need for support was moderately associated with the number of years a teacher had taught at the school ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$). Teachers who had taught at the school for a relatively short amount of time (because they were list A's or teachers new to the school) generally needed more support than those who had taught at the school for a greater number of years. This suggests two situations where teachers may need a lot of support (1) when they are junior teachers or (2) when teachers shift to a new school and need support to help them adapt. During interviews respondents outlined other situations in which need for support may be high. These included the time of the year (for example during exams, reports, major production or musical events), illness and personal crises (sickness in the family, marital separation or divorce ...). So although need for support appears to be linked generally to experience levels, specific situations require extra support, or in the words of a HOD

> "No matter how good a teacher you are, there will always be a time when you need support."

Teachers' Support-Type Networks

Size of teachers' support-type networks

Teachers' support-type networks were also investigated as an examination of only their overall support networks could hide differences between the different types of support. Indeed, differences were discovered between the size of the different support types. Table 5 illustrates that the largest network of all five supportive types was the socialising network. Teachers reported on average eight individuals with whom they had socialised during the past month. The second largest network was material aid with teachers naming on average seven others who had recently given them material aid. This however is likely to be an underestimate as one-third of teachers stated they had named only a very core group of individuals who had helped them in this way.

TABLE 5

Size of Teachers' Support-type Networks

Support-type networks	mean number of supporters	range of supporters
material aid	7.2	0-18
emotional	4.9	1-20
information	3.5	0-14
feedback	2.7	0-11
socialising	8.7	0-19

Teachers had on average five individuals who had given them emotional support (this was the only support category in which no-one reported they had not received support from anyone). The informational support network was the next smallest followed by feedback which

contained on average two supporters.

Composition of teachers' support-type networks

A stable group of supporters was noted in teachers' material aid, emotional and informational networks. This group consisted of the principal, deputy principal, HOD, PR holders, assistant teachers, school staff and educational advisers. However, most dominant in respondents' material aid networks were assistant teachers, their own HOD, PR's, school staff and educational advisers (see Table 6). Assistant teachers, their own HOD, PR's and

TABLE 6

Composition of Support-type Networks

Support-type Network	Most frequently-named supporters
Material aid	assis, HOD, PR's, sch staff, educ advis
Emotional	assis, HOD, PR's, sch staff, partner
Information	HOD, PR's, DP
Feedback	assis, HOD, Prin
Socialising	assis, friends

Key

assis = assistant teachers
HOD = own head of department
PR's = PR holders
sch staff = school staff
educ advis = educational advisers
partner = teacher's partner
DP = deputy principal
prin = principal
friends = non-teaching friends

school staff dominated as sources of emotional support. An important inclusion in this category was the support received from partners. In terms of informational

support, HOD's, PR's and the DP were the main sources of support. Feedback primarily came from teachers' own HOD, principal or occasionally from assistant teachers. Finally, assistant teachers and non-teaching friends were supportive at a social level.

This indicates that there are a wide range of others who support teachers although different groups of individuals are of varying importance as sources of support. Work sources of support appear the most salient but non-work sources of support in the form of partners and friends are important sources of emotional and socialising support.

Teachers' perceptions of support-type networks

Table 7 illustrates that the highest number of satisfied teachers (65), were those satisfied with the material aid they received. Sixty-three teachers were satisfied with the informational support they received and 58 were satisfied with their emotional support. However, a considerably lower number of respondents (44) were satisfied with the feedback and socialising support (54) they received. In addition, 19 teachers indicated they were dissatisfied with their socialising support, some stating because of a lack of time in which to socialise. Overall, teachers were most satisfied with the material aid and information support they received and least satisfied and most dissatisfied respectively with their feedback and socialising support.

Gender was found to be associated with teachers' satisfaction with the emotional support they received.

Eighty-seven percent (34) of female teachers were satisfied with the emotional support they received in

TABLE 7

Teachers' Satisfaction by Support-type

Support-type	not appl.	very dissat.	dis-satis.	not sure	sat-isf.	very satis.
material aid	1	-	3	6	43	22
emotional	-	1	8	8	37	21
information	4	-	2	6	42	21
feedback	9	-	9	13	37	7
socialising	-	2	17	2	39	15

comparison to 66 percent (24) of male teachers ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$). In addition, teaching position was found to relate to teachers' satisfaction with their material aid support ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.05$). Twenty-nine percent of list A teachers were dissatisfied or not sure about their material aid support in comparison to 7 percent of assistant teachers and no PR's. In addition only 70 percent of list A's were satisfied with their material aid support while 93 percent of assistant teachers and 90 percent of PR holders were satisfied.

Table 8 shows that need for support also varied across the five support types. For both material aid and emotional support one-half of the teachers indicated they needed 'a little' support. Need for informational

support, although more evenly dispersed also appeared to be 'a little' for many teachers. Teachers appeared to have a greater need for feedback as 33 indicated 'some' need and 25 needed 'a lot'. Finally teachers had a moderate

TABLE 8

Need for Support by Support-type

Support-type	Number of teachers need for support			
	Not at all	a little	some	a lot
material aid	6	41	15	13
emotional	6	35	17	17
information	14	30	18	13
feedback	3	14	33	25
socialising	2	22	35	16

need for socialising with 35 respondents stating 'some' need for socialising. In summary, teachers indicated their greatest needs were for feedback and socialising support with teachers needing 'a little' of the other three types.

Need for informational support was related to teaching position. Eighty-six percent of list A teachers needed either 'some' or 'a lot' of informational support. This compared with only 29 percent of assistant teachers and 35 percent of PR holders ($r = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$). This trend of list A teachers requiring more support than assistant teachers and PR's was also evident for

material aid and emotional support, although the trend was not significant for these two categories.

3.3 THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

The aim of this section is to determine which aspects of social support are associated with job satisfaction, intention to leave their current position, morale and which aspects are predictive of these variables.

Correlation coefficients were computed using the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine which biographical and support variables are associated with the above criterion variables. Not all of the biographical variables which were correlated are presented, only the most significant ones. The remaining variables were either a function of other variables (for example teaching position) or lacked discriminatory power (for example education).

Table 9 shows that gender and teaching position were the only biographical variables significantly related to any of the criterion variables. In contrast all of the support variables, except for the 'number of reciprocal relationships', were related to the criterion variables.

Four variables correlated significantly with total job satisfaction. These were teaching position ($r = 0.27$), the number of potential supporters ($r = 0.20$), the number of conflictual supporters ($r = -0.21$) and finally satisfaction with support which correlated the highest ($r = 0.53$).

TABLE 9

Correlations between Job Attitude Variables and Support and Biographical Variables

Biographical Variables	Criterion variables: Job satisfaction	Intention to leave present position	Positive morale	Negative morale
Gender	.00	-.27*	.08	-.15
Years at school	.00	.08	-.16	.01
Number of years full-time teaching	-.05	.07	-.16	-.08
Teaching position	.27**	.07	-.00	-.06
Age	.14	.02	-.15	-.07
Support Variables	**Job satisfaction**	**Intention to leave present position**	**Positive morale**	**Negative morale**
Number of reciprocal relationships	-.00	.00	.10	.00
Number of potential conflictual relationships	.13	.05	.09	-.19*
Number of actual conflictual relationships	.17	-.18	.00	-.26**
Number of potential supporters	.20*	-.12	.11	-.18
Number of actual supporters	-.01	-.20*	.21*	-.22*
Number of conflictual supporters	-.21*	.04	-.03	.06
Need for support	-.18	.08	.05	.21*
Satisfaction with support	.53***	-.24*	.31**	-.11

*** = $p < 0.001$
** = $p < 0.01$
* = $p < 0.05$

This indicates that several aspects of social support, most notably the respondent's satisfaction with support, and their teaching position were associated with their level of job satisfaction.

The number of actual supporters ($r = -0.20$), teachers' satisfaction with support ($r = -0.24$) and their gender ($r = -0.27$) were significantly related to teachers' leaving intentions. Although two aspects of support (the number of actual supporters and satisfaction with support) were associated with intention to leave, gender was correlated slightly stronger with teachers' leaving intentions.

Two variables, satisfaction with support ($r = 0.31$) and the number of actual supporters ($r = 0.21$) were correlated significantly with positive morale. Finally, negative morale was correlated with the number of potential conflictual relationships ($r = -0.19$), the number of actual conflictual relationships ($r = -0.26$), the number of actual supporters ($r = -0.22$) and need for support ($r = 0.21$). This indicates that both positive and negative morale are slightly associated with aspects, albeit different ones, of social support.

Table 10 displays the correlations among the criterion variables. All variables were significantly correlated except for positive and negative morale. The strongest, although modest, associations were between positive morale and job satisfaction ($r = 0.38$, $p < .001$) and negative morale and intention to

leave ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.001$).

TABLE 10

Correlations among Criterion Variables

	Job satis-faction	Intention to leave present position	Positive morale	Negative morale
Job satisfaction	-	-.29**	.38***	-.19*
Intention to leave	-	-	-.31**	.37***
Positive morale	-	-	-	-.19

*** = $p < 0.001$
** = $p < 0.01$
* = $p < 0.05$

On the basis of the correlation analysis the highest five-six correlated variables with each of the criterion variables were submitted to exploratory multiple regression analysis. Correlations between the biographical and support variables were checked to ensure they were not high to avoid the problem of multicollinearity (Weisberg and Bowen, 1977). Entry regression was used in which variables are entered one at a time in order of decreasing tolerance (SPSSX, 1983).

Multiple regression analysis revealed four variables were significant and accounted for 44 percent of the variance in predicting job satisfaction ($F = 13.84$, $p < 0.0000$) (see Table 11). These variables were satisfaction with support, teaching position, positive morale and the number of actual conflictual relationships. All of these variables except for the number of actual conflictual relationships correlated significantly with

job satisfaction. The most powerful predictor of job

TABLE 11

Multiple Regression predicting Job Satisfaction

Variables	Beta weights	Significance level
1. number of actual conflictual relationships	.23	$p < 0.05$
2. teaching position	.25	$p < 0.01$
3. satisfaction with support	.45	$p < 0.0000$
4. positive morale	.24	$p < 0.05$ $R^2=.44$

satisfaction was teachers' satisfaction with support indicating that teachers who were satisfied with the support they received were also satisfied with their job. Overall, this indicates that more experienced teachers, teachers who have high levels of positive morale, teachers who are satisfied with their support and those with fewer actual conflictual relationships tend to be more satisfied with teaching.

Teachers' intentions to leave their present position were predicted by three variables which accounted for 23 percent of the variance ($F = 7.24$, $p < 0.0005$). These three variables were gender, job satisfaction and negative morale (see Table 12). All three variables correlated with intention to leave, and negative morale was the strongest predictor of teachers' leaving intentions. This means that male teachers, teachers with low job satisfaction and those with high levels of negative morale are most likely to want to leave their present job. No aspects

of support predicted intention to leave.

TABLE 12

Multiple Regression predicting Intention to Leave Present Job

Variables	Beta weights	Significance level	
1. negative morale	.29	$p < 0.01$	
2. sex	-.22	$p < 0.05$	
3. job satisfaction	-.24	$p < 0.05$	$R^2=.23$

Three variables were found to predict positive morale and these accounted for 25 percent of the variance ($F = 7.9$, $p < 0.0001$). These variables were job satisfaction, the number of actual supporters and the number of years full-time teaching, although the latter did not correlate with positive morale (see Table 13). The most significant predictor of positive morale was teachers' job satisfaction meaning that teachers who were more satisfied with their job, had higher levels of positive morale. Overall, teachers who are satisfied with their job, teachers who have a greater number of actual supporters and those with a lower number of years full-time teaching have higher levels of positive morale.

TABLE 13

Multiple Regression predicting Positive Morale

Variables	Beta weights	Significance level	
1. number of actual supporters	.31	$p < 0.01$	
2. job satisfaction	.37	$p < 0.0005$	
3. number of years full-time teaching	-.26	$p < 0.05$	$R^2=.25$

Finally, negative morale among teachers was predicted by three variables which accounted for 17 percent of the variance ($F = 4.9$, $p < 0.005$). These variables were the number of actual supporters, the number of actual conflictual relationships and teachers' need for support, all of which correlated with negative morale (see Table 14). The number of actual conflictual relationships was the most important predictor of negative morale, although the inverse relationship between the two is not easily explained. Individuals who had a lower number of actual conflictual relationships had higher levels of negative morale. One possible explanation may be the fact that the measure of actual conflictual relationships indexed the number in comparison to the intensity or magnitude of these conflictual relationships. It may be that the intensity of the conflictual relationship has the greater impact on morale. For example, one 'high-intensity' conflictual relationship may have a greater impact on morale than three 'low-

TABLE 14

Multiple Regression predicting Negative Morale

Variables	Beta weights	Significance level	
1. number of actual supporters	-.22	$p < 0.05$	
2. number of actual conflictual relationships	-.31	$p < 0.01$	
3. need for support	.20	$p < 0.10$	$R^2=.17$

intensity' conflictual relationships. Overall, teachers who have a lower number of actual supporters, those who have a lower number of actual conflictual relationships and those with a greater need for support, tend to have high levels of negative morale.

In summary, social support was associated to some extent with all four criterion variables and predicted job satisfaction, positive morale, negative morale but not intention to leave. The aspects of social support which emerged as the most important were the number of actual supporters, the number of actual conflictual relationships and satisfaction with support. In particular, satisfaction with support emerged as the most significant support variable and as the most powerful predictor of job satisfaction.

3.4 SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG TEACHERS

This final section explores the nature of social support in a qualitative manner. This is achieved through the use of open-ended questions which allow the respondent freedom in the way they answer. The behaviours which teachers perceived as supportive are outlined first.

The Effectiveness of Social Support

Seventy-one of the 75 respondents recalled at least one behaviour they perceived as supportive. Many teachers named several behaviours as multiple mentions were allowed for all the questions. The 10 most commonly rated behaviours as supportive are outlined in Table 15 (the entire range is displayed in Appendix B).

Feedback (particularly related to teaching rather than extra curricular activities) emerged as the most frequently-mentioned (36) supportive behaviour. Feedback came from a variety of sources but most notably from colleagues, HOD and principal. It acted to reassure the teacher as otherwise many felt they had little indication of their progress or if they were doing a worthwhile job. Feedback also produced other beneficial outcomes as a list A teacher outlined:

> "Being a first year teacher I've been petrified that I was doing something wrong, but when others say I've been doing well, it boosts my confidence - just knowing someone has noticed you're doing okay."

A related behaviour mentioned 12 times as supportive was gaining recognition for my work or others appreciating my help. One teacher explained:

> "I work on a 10 percent basis, if I can get 10 percent of what I do, if I can get recognition for it I'm more than happy. You don't get it otherwise. If you work on a fairly low level you can make it through."

Help from the head of department also emerged as being an important supportive behaviour. In particular help related to curriculum matters, discipline problems, positive suggestions and discussions, encouragement and just "keeping an eye on me" were named specifically. The sharing of resources and ideas within departments was also described as supportive and this not only saved time but also reduced problems with subject material.

Support related to discipline matters was another area outlined. It was important that teachers felt there was a discipline system to which they could refer students to, that problems were seen to quickly, that they were able to talk to someone and that they felt 'backed up' on decisions. One teacher recalled:

> "I've got a bottom 4th form class and they're pretty tough to manage, they're noisy, highly-strung, but any complaints I can go straight to the 4th form Dean and we sit down and we usually sort them out pretty quickly. Also you know with the 4th form Dean that he'll believe you and not

the kids' excuses while others in the hierarchy

TABLE 15
Behaviours Most Commonly Named as Supportive by Teachers

	Behaviour	Number of times rated as supportive
1.	Positive feedback	36
2.	Department colleagues sharing resources, ideas	17
3.	Help from HOD (suggestions, guidance)	14
4.	An effective discipline system	13
5.	Appreciation or recognition for my work	12
6.	Colleagues who listen or encourage me	8
7.	Colleagues who take on work to help me (marking a test)	7
8.	An individual mentioned as supportive (DP, SM.)	7
9.	Leave organised without problems	5
10.	Feeling able to go to others, others offering help	4

if you go to them with a problem, you feel that they point the finger at you."

It became apparent that what one particular person viewed as supportive was not necessarily considered supportive by someone else. Although a number of teachers rated feedback and material aid support as important, others stated that emotional support was effective:

"I think the most supportive thing is to be able to have a conversation with one of the other

> teachers on quite a personal level, to talk about how you're feeling about teaching - it helps you realise your perspective on it."

Although most teachers named supportive behaviours a number of teachers mentioned a particular person and their 'style' as being supportive. One senior teacher mentioned the SM at the school -

> "... the SM recognises individuals as being busy and he will operate around that and will arrange relievers for those he recognises as pressured ... it's the best form of support there is as it's recognition for what you're doing and something's happening about it, they're doing it because they notice it rather than you having to tell them."

Most teachers (60) were also able to identify behaviours which they perceived as unsupportive. A smaller range of behaviours were outlined in comparison to the broad range of behaviours which teachers considered as supportive. The list of behaviours is displayed in Table 16.

Criticisms or complaints from others about students, the teacher's own work, subject area or extracurricular activities were the most frequently mentioned (20) unsupportive behaviours. One teacher observed:

> "We're far more ready to criticise, that's teachers on the whole, than to praise."

While the effects of criticism were seen by one teacher as having:

"... the potential to destroy the morale and quality of teaching."

Having extra responsibilities or demands placed on teachers (for example an extra duty or class) was described as unsupportive. Also listed was inadequate feedback and

TABLE 16

Behaviours Described as Unsupportive by Teachers

	Behaviour	Number of times rated as unsupportive
1.	Criticism or complaints about kids, work, subject...	20
2.	Having extra responsibilities or demands placed on me	8
3.	Lack of positive feedback	7
4.	Problems organising equipment	7
5.	Lack of co-operation from others	7
6.	Political (others going behind my back...)	5
7.	Discipline matters	5
8.	Hassles when going on leave (having to organise lessons)	3
9.	Staff not consulting with me	3
10.	Attitude of others toward me (treat me as priviledged, incompetent...)	3
11.	Others' inefficiency	2
12.	Administrative hassles	2
13.	Others not wanting my input	1
14.	Government action	1

teachers not consulting with each other. A junior teacher recalled a situation when:

> "... an extra kid was added to my already over-full class and I wasn't asked or warned and they were just brought in and dumped on me."

Organisational problems were stated such as staff taking or not returning equipment or staff not co-operating, for example not feeding back necessary information. A number of teachers mentioned 'political' behaviours such as when other teachers spoke behind their back or made complaints without giving teachers an opportunity to defend themselves. Finally the handling of discipline matters was sometimes seen as unsupportive.

> "If I'm having trouble with a kid and I ask for help, I don't really feel that I'm backed up on it ... if I've referred them, the Dean gives the impression that there were no problems and the kid comes back with the impression that they've got one over me. I feel the Deans support the kids rather than the teachers and although it's not a common problem, when it does happen it's quite discouraging."

To understand what is effective social support it is necessary to be aware of what behaviours enhance the individual's feelings of being supported. A range of behaviours were outlined but material aid support from HOD and colleagues (particularly resource and discipline-related

help) and feedback were the most commonly-named. Behaviours which reduced perceptions of supportiveness such as criticisms and inadequate feedback also appeared to increase stress, and lower levels of confidence and morale.

The Adequacy of Social Support

Just under one-half of the sample (36) recalled one or more situations within the last term in which they felt they had lacked support. The situations are outlined in Table 17. A variety of circumstances were described ranging from necessary information not being passed on, to feeling pressured, to problems with large or varying ability classes. Three situations however appeared to dominate. These included the preparation of resources or programs, dealing with discipine or child-related problems and assessing their own progress.

More specifically, preparing resources or programs included having to develop their own resources, lacking information or not having anyone to exchange ideas with and finally having inadequate guidelines for setting up a new course or program. An assistant teacher who was involved in a new program described her feelings:

> "... it's just been thrown at us and we've been left to cope with it as best we can ... nobody said what should be in it, just a few vague ideas thrown around."

In addition, teachers expressed concern over others not sharing ideas about lessons or even information such as

available equipment or resources in the school. Not having adequate teaching materials was a concern expressed by a range of teachers. One HOD commented:

> "I think as HOD you sometimes could do with the support of other HOD's but they're not competent in your subject area so really when it comes to producing tests and assignments and things like that you rely on people in your department to help you along. But they tend to be pretty busy because they've got full timetables and are less experienced so that's frustrating in the sense that you have to produce the stuff for people to use in the department. Sometimes you'd like to get assistance with that but it's got to be somebody who's equivalent."

A second group of teachers felt they lacked support in discipline-related matters. This included instances where teachers had no-one to refer kids to or had no-one to talk to about discipline problems, where the discipline system was ineffective, inconsistent, or not properly established or finally when there was a lack of system back-up. Teachers often felt left on their own, not knowing how to deal with problems and that no-one was available when they needed them.

Finally, the third major area where teachers felt they lacked support related to the assessment of their own progress. Inadequate feedback placed many teachers in the dilemma of

not knowing if their work was satisfactory or not. Silence could be interpreted as indicating either good or poor progress. One junior teacher outlined her situation:

> "For my HOD, silence is praise. If he hasn't said anything you know you are doing well. If you're waiting for him to give you a pat on your back, it's not going to happen."

TABLE 17

Situations Where Teachers Felt They Lacked Social Support

	Situation	Number of times situation named
1.	Preparing resources or programs	16
2.	Dealing with discipline/child problems	11
3.	Assessing own progress	11
4.	Information not passed on	6
5.	Feeling pressured	5
6.	Large or differing ability classes	4
7.	Organising events	4
8.	'Political'	3
9.	Needing to talk to someone	2
10.	Inadequate support from HOD	2
11.	Few social activities	1
12.	New to the school	1
13.	Time constraints of class lessons	1

This lack of direct feedback not only created uncertainty but also created doubts regarding one's confidence and competence in addition to a heightened sense of isolation.

Influences on Social Support

A number of influences on the support that other teachers provided, were suggested by teachers. Replies were categorised into 12 reasons which are displayed in Table 18. Three main reasons appeared.

First, lack of time and the busyness of others emerged as the most dominant reason (33). More specifically there was often little time available and when there was teachers were not necessarily available nor was it always convenient to discuss problems. A senior teacher elaborated on the situation from his perspective:

> "... there is a need for support, it is there but one of the things that impedes it all of the time is time. Young teachers need a lot of support and people in my position have many tasks and are pushed for time."

A second important reason given by 23 teachers related to the pressures of the job. The demands and stresses and resulting tiredness meant that:

> "... people are just so concerned about keeping themselves above water that they're not looking out for others."

Third, personality factors were mentioned by 20 teachers. This included jealousy, guardedness, selfishness, frustration, bitterness and the clashes of individual personalities.

TABLE 18

Reasons Given by Teachers why Colleagues Are Not Always Supportive

	Reason	Number of teachers
1.	Teachers are too busy, they lack time	33
2.	Teachers have their own pressures (caught up in their own world)	23
3.	Personality reasons (jealousy, selfishness ...)	20
4.	Political (protection of own position ...)	7
5.	Lack of concern	5
6.	Lack of awareness	4
7.	Professional competitiveness	3
8.	Don't know how to help	2
9.	School environment	2
10.	Don't want to interfere	1
11.	Financial - lack of resources	1
12.	There is no formal support system operating	1

In addition to these three main reasons, respondents included a variety of other influences. These included departmental rivalry within schools, teachers not knowing how to help, not wanting to interfere or political reasons. Teachers stated that other teachers were not always aware of others' needs, did not notice support was needed or just forgot what it was like to be a junior teacher. An assistant teacher outlined her interpretation of why teachers at her school were not supportive of a list A teacher:

> "I overheard a comment about our year one and she's teaching a new subject, it's tough for her and I heard someone talking about her - the fact that she spends all weekend preparing lessons. It's typical. There's no need for someone who has been teaching for 10 years to spend all their free time preparing lessons and they sort of look at this list A person and think 'you don't know any better yet, you're getting yourself tied up in knots about nothing' but you've got to create the material and they forget what it's like to be a first year or a second year."

An HOD explained the situation from his perspective:

> "... sometimes people are unsupportive because of a lack of communication. Schools are quite complex places and sometimes people might not be aware of what's going on ... I should be more aware of what's going on in the classrooms of the junior teachers in my department. At the moment I don't think there are any great problems but there could be that I don't know about."

Finally teachers felt that sometimes colleagues were unconcerned or could not be bothered to support others.

When teachers were asked why they themselves were not always supportive some of these replies reappeared (see Table 19). As in the previous question, lack of time was an overwhelming reason. Thirty-seven teachers specified that often they were just too busy to help others. The related factor of being caught up in their own stresses and problems was stated by 14 respondents. Other reasons which reappeared included lack of awareness of others' problems, not knowing how to help, personality factors and political reasons. These last two reasons, particularly personality factors were however of lesser importance in explaining their own supportiveness in comparison with others' suppor-

tiveness.

A notable difference in the replies given to the two questions was the appearance of the reason 'I'm as supportive as I can be.' Fourteen teachers felt there were no reasons why they were not supportive as they tried to be as supportive as they could, working within the limitations of the existing system. Several different reasons were outlined by teachers to explain why they were not always supportive. Teachers often felt 'tired', 'exhausted' or 'the need to switch off and unwind.' Eleven teachers stated they were still in a learning position and so felt that others knew better than them. In addition respondents stated they were not always supportive of others who they did not know, did not have regular contact with or due to their own opinions of the individual (for example if they did not hold them in high professional esteem). Finally, negative reactions from helping others were described by eight teachers as an important factor influencing their supportiveness. This covered rejection, feeling put down, nosey, not wanting to interfere, offend or appear superior. An assistant teacher explained his views:

> "A lot of the time when you give support it implies you're superior, you're better, so you do shrink back when you know someone's having problems, you're not so keen to support. It's a very sensitive thing, if you're having problems yourself you don't want someone coming in and sorting them out, you've got to know them well

TABLE 19

Reasons Given by Teachers Why They Are Not Always Supportive of Others

	Reason	Number of Teachers
1.	I'm too busy, not enough time	37
2.	I have a heavy workload and my own problems/pressures	14
3.	I'm as supportive as I can be	14
4.	I'm too tired, lack energy	13
5.	Own inexperience, lack of knowledge	11
6.	Not aware of others or forget	8
7.	Negative reactions from helping	8
8.	My personal opinions of them (not helping themselves...)	7
9.	Not knowing them or having regular contact with them	5
10.	Because of the personality of those concerned	3
11.	Not knowing how to help	2
12.	Political (if I disagree with them)	1
13.	It's not my role to help others	1
14.	If they don't reciprocate	1

personally beforehand."

The two different perspectives of others' supportiveness and the respondent's own supportiveness resulted in some similar answers. Most notably, lack of time and the pressures of teaching appeared as dominant factors for both

the questions.

The following question examined what factors prevented teachers from seeking support from others (see Table 20). The aim was to examine if teachers were indeed reluctant to use their support resources and to discover reasons for this reluctance. If teachers are hesitant to utilise their support resources, this has important implications for the development and efficiency of support systems within schools. A senior teacher commented:

> "Those who need support and nobody has perceived that they need support and they don't ask for it, then we've got a problem and I'm not sure how any system is meant to handle people who conceal that they've got problems ... How do we get people to use the formal system that does exist?"

Slightly less than one-third (23) of the sample stated that nothing prevented them from seeking support when they needed it. By implication then, two-thirds of the sample were prevented from seeking social support at some time. Pride emerged as being the most dominant reason why many teachers did not always seek help. Teachers did not want to appear silly, incompetent or always asking for help or having problems. To go to others and admit you were having problems was viewed by teachers as a sign of failure. Teachers felt it was an indication they were inadequate or not coping and many felt they were being judged and seen as 'not going to make it.' One teacher stated that seeking

TABLE 20

Factors Preventing Teachers from Seeking Social Support

	Factor	Number of teachers who named factor
1.	Nothing - if I need help I go to someone	23
2.	Pride - not wanting to look silly or incompetent	25
3.	Others are too busy or pressured	13
4.	I am careful or wary of who I go to for help (have my own support system)	12
5.	I'm too busy or pressured	10
6.	I work independently of others, am self-reliant	7
7.	If they're unapproachable or I don't know them well	5
8.	If they were unsupportive in the past	2
9.	Other's inefficiency or lack of feedback to me	2
10.	Not wanting to be overdependent on others	2
11.	Not speaking up or feeling positive enough to ask for help	2
12.	Departmental rivalry	1
13.	Unaware of the support systems in the school	1

help makes:

> "... you feel like there's something wrong if you have to admit you're having problems with kids. On a professional level that means you're not doing what you should."

This attitude or feeling was expressed by teachers in all teaching positions and for both sexes although more males felt this way. Several senior teachers felt that because of their experience they should be able to deal with the problem on their own. This attitude however was not exclusive of less experienced teachers as one junior teacher stated:

> "I sometimes feel that if there's a problem in my classroom that's where it should stay. It's my problem and I should deal with it. Things have to be quite out of hand before I take it to another teacher."

Some teachers however, were trying to develop a more positive approach by viewing admitting you need help as recognition that you can improve or that you did not know what to do so that you can solve the problem quicker and work better.

Perhaps because of the strong professional pride aspect, some teachers stated they found it difficult to ask for help.

> "I tend not to ask for help, I find it difficult to go and say I'm having difficulties."

Another said:

> "It's hard to ask ... [for help] ... and people never offer it. It doesn't occur to them."

A variety of other reasons were listed by teachers as preventing them from seeking support. Often the respond-

ent's own busyness and pressures or those of others were a barrier. Some teachers were wary of who they went to for support, stating they would not go to people who they did not trust, who were judgemental or threatening. Further, such teachers often preferred to use their own support networks rather than the 'official' ones as their informal networks were more supportive and they feared that seeking support 'officially' would be held against them. One teacher recalled:

> "I know one staff member who used to send problem kids to the Dean for discipline and that teacher was thought to be a weak teacher because the Dean kept raising it at Deans' meetings that so and so was having problems with this kid. That teacher doesn't send any kids to the Dean now, he doesn't even talk to the Dean."

A person's own 'independent' personality often meant they worked self-sufficiently, sometimes because it was easier to do things by themself. If teachers did not know others very well or found then unapproachable this acted as a barrier to approaching them. If colleagues were unsupportive in the past this hindered respondents seeking support from them again as the following quote illustrates:

> "I don't go to the principal because in my first year he rubbished something of mine which was uncalled for and he had the wrong end of the stick. I won't go back to him

now, that's the last time I go to him."

Finally, a few teachers did not seek support because they felt too much support could be detrimental as it promoted overdependence on others, loosened the respect of the kids and prevented teachers from solving problems and thereby from 'growing'.

In order to understand how environmental variables influence social support, respondents were asked to determine what particular aspects of their school environment encouraged or discouraged support. Aspects that encouraged support are displayed in Table 21. The most frequently named aspect was the school's philosophy (19). Philosophies such as encouraging staff to work together as a team, to support others, to talk about problems and stating that problems are school problems were mentioned. One teacher stated:

> "The school environment encourages everyone to be supportive, to work as a team not as individuals. It's one of the school's philosophies. You've got to as if you leave a teacher on their own the kids will eat them up. I think that's why the staff get on so well, we are supportive and even if you don't like someone you'll still back them before any kid."

TABLE 21

Aspects of the School Environment That Encourage Social Support

	Aspect	Number of teachers who stated aspect
1.	School's philosophy (working as a team, 'caring' school...)	19
2.	Established support and discipline system (for example a buddy system)	10
3.	Constant contact with others	8
4.	Communal and separate work area from the staffroom	5
5.	Open and friendly staff	5
6.	Accessible and approachable administrators	4
7.	Social activities	4
8.	Pleasant/relaxing staffroom, relaxing interval	4
9.	Positive and regular staff meetings	3
10.	Departments encouraging sharing of resources, ideas...	1
11.	Support encouraged among women staff members	1
12.	Praise from administration	1

An established support system was described by 10 teachers as a factor encouraging support. Examples included an effective discipline or Dean system, a list A program where junior teachers would meet once a week to discuss problems and achievements or a buddy system where staff were paired off with another staff member or one of the hierarchy

for support.

Constant contact with others such as when teachers moved around the school during the day or through the proximity of classrooms served to promote feelings of togetherness and unity and reduce isolation. Having a separate and preferably communal work area away from the staffroom was seen as encouraging support by five teachers. A pleasant and more importantly, relaxing staffroom together with a relaxing interval were also mentioned. Further, accessible and approachable administrators, an open and friendly staff, good social activities and regular positive staff meetings were outlined as important environmental aspects.

Aspects of the school environment that teachers stated discouraged support are outlined in Table 22. The factor named most frequently as discouraging support was the spread-out nature and distances within many secondary schools. Teachers found this particularly frustrating when their department, classrooms or labs were scattered around the school. Both this problem and when a department did not have a distinct area of a school, increased feelings of isolation and made it even more difficult to observe what others were doing.

> "... the isolation of classrooms ... is what makes the comparisons between schools enormous between feeling supported versus isolated."

The standard of the staffroom and interval break appeared to influence support for 15 teachers. Staffrooms

TABLE 22

Aspects of the School Environment That Discourage Social Support

	Aspect	Number of teachers who stated aspect
1.	Distances within the school	18
2.	Unpleasant or tense staffroom, tense interval	15
3.	School's philosophy (for example lack of trust and openness, tension between groups...)	14
4.	Fragmented, small or an insufficient number of work areas	11
5.	People difficult to find	7
6.	School system - lack of time	5
7.	Inadequate, run-down physical environment	5
8.	Inadequate, inefficient discipline system	4
9.	Tensions between departments	3
10.	No-one to talk to about problems	2
11.	Poor communication	2
12.	No effort by administration to praise staff	1
13.	Lack of social activities	1
14.	Staff not willing to support a new principal	1
15.	Autocratic school	1
16.	Unfriendly office staff	1
17.	Carpooling and having to leave immediately after school	1

that were inaccessible, small, smoky, uncomfortably-furnished, 'dingy' or badly planned either discouraged teachers from using them or otherwise teachers struggled to relax in such an environment. One particular teacher likened the school's staffroom to a train station while another teacher remarked:

> "... the staffroom is very cramped, it's a busy working place, it's not very relaxing. People are rushing in and out and there are notices everywhere and things you've got to take note of, kids knocking at the door..."

Likewise a teacher commented about interval at a particular school:

> "Interval is often a flat-out situation, you can't talk to anyone, you're just overwhelmed by notices, meetings and there are constant interruptions and so much going on around you."

The school's philosophy or atmosphere was rated as influential by 14 teachers, particularly the presence of 'in' and 'out' groups, a lack of trust and openness, tension between departments or staff groups, an intolerant, inconsistent, traditional or critical atmosphere. Support was also hampered by fragmented work areas, too small or not enough workspaces and a lack of private space within the school. In addition not being able to find people when they were needed because of the size of the school and remoteness

of the administration area, discouraged support.

Recommendations for Improving Social Support

Finally, respondents were asked how teachers in the school could be more supportive. As teachers were responding to a wide array of school situations there was considerable variation in their recommendations (see Table 23).

Previous questions outlined time as a major constraint on support. It is therefore not surprising that one of the most commonly mentioned (10) suggestions was to increase non-teaching time. This would improve support teachers argued, by reducing work pressures and allowing more opportunities in which support could naturally occur. Eight teachers felt that the way the present system was structured however, precluded support and that fundamental changes were necessary in the education department, in terms of time allowances, for more support to happen.

Fifteen teachers suggested less competition and greater co-operation both within and between departments. This included the sharing and organising of resources and ideas so that teachers were not always 'reinventing the wheel."

For a number of respondents their main form of support originated from talking informally to others. Eight teachers therefore suggested more social opportunities so staff could get to know each other better and have more

TABLE 23

Recommendations Made by Teachers to Improve Social Support

Recommendation	Number of teachers who made the recommendation
1. Sharing of resources, less competition within and between departments	15
2. More non-teaching time	10
3. More social opportunities, time to talk	8
4. Fewer criticisms	8
5. Feedback committee or discussion forum	8
6. Acknowledgement of progress, greater recognition	7
7. Be more receptive to newcomers and relievers	6
8. Administrators be less removed from staff and aware of classroom demands	6
9. Visit other classrooms in same or different school	6
10. More consistent or co-ordinated discipline system, greater back-up for teachers	5
11. Professional discussions between teachers and their senior over problems, achievements and future directions	5
12. Improve the standard of the staffroom/interval	5
13. Halve class sizes	4
14. More meetings for teachers of the same class to raise problems, compare notes...	4
15. Be more aware and understanding of others	3

16.	More ancillary help for non-teaching tasks or for the preparation of resources	3
17.	Not sit with the same group in the staffroom	3
18.	More regular women's group meetings	3
19.	Initiate a buddy system	3
20.	Less administrative work and more constructive suggestions at departmental meetings	3
21.	Improved workspaces	3
22.	Staff support all extra-curricular activities	2
23.	Talk to teacher honestly when a problem arises instead of complaining behind their back	2
24.	Increased understanding of others' subjects	2
25.	Less hassle getting relievers	2
26.	Improve staff relationships	2
27.	Don't leave teachers on their own to sort out problems	2
28.	Appoint a staff liaison officer to act as a counsellor to staff	1
29.	Less pride among teachers	1
30.	HOD's place more emphasis on teacher support than administrative work	1
31.	Decrease stress associated with noise in classrooms (e.g. carpet them)	1
32.	List A teaching load the same for the first 3 years	1
33.	Better defined syllabus for new courses	1

34.	Return borrowed equipment	1
35.	Better communication between the staff and board	1

chances to sit down and be supportive.

Fewer criticisms and a less judgemental atmosphere were advocated. A teacher commented:

> "... we need to change the critical, judgemental atmosphere especially for the newer, younger people around the place who may feel written off earlier."

More praise and recognition for teachers' time, efforts and achievements were also proposed. Despite this a small proportion of teachers felt cautious about increased attempts to praise staff. Such attempts if done regularly were seen as losing their impact or becoming too trite. In addition, caution was expressed if praising teachers placed them in competition with others, for example when a teacher was told they were doing better than another.

Other suggestions included staff being more aware and receptive to newcomers and not always sitting with the same group of teachers in the staffroom. A desire was expressed for administrators to be less removed from their staff and more in touch with the demands and realities of the classroom and day to day struggles. Eight teachers stated there should be greater opportunities for staff to make recommendations or feedback ideas to administrators.

Six respondents were in favour of visiting other

teachers' classrooms either at their school or at a different school. This was seen as a way to enable teachers to observe others' teaching styles as well as a way of overcoming the lack of feedback inherent in the job. Others however, were more hesitant stating that having colleagues in their classroom made them feel uncomfortable. This was particularly acute if the observer was in a position of authority as teachers felt uneasy and as if they were being inspected. Teachers felt trapped by wanting feedback but not wanting any criticisms or their competence to be queried.

A senior teacher outlined the paradox:

> "Our most important job is teaching but which job we get the least encouragement over - teaching. We do this important job in isolation but we feel threatened when another adult comes into the room but we still reserve the right to complain that no-one's telling us how we're doing."

Several teachers recommended that all staff members be interviewed regularly on a professional basis by either their HOD or principal to discuss their problems, achievements and future direction. More ancillary help was suggested to either free teachers of non-teaching tasks (for example administrative, cleaning tasks) or aid teachers in the preparation of resources. One teacher proposed the employment of an independent staff liaison officer to act as a guidance counsellor by checking on the welfare of staff.

Finally, an experienced teacher suggested that the HOD's role had been defined in the wrong way. Instead HOD's should be more concerned with the teacher-support side of their job rather than get caught up in the administrative aspects.

In summary, teachers outlined a wide variety of suggestions of how social support could be improved in secondary schools.

DISCUSSION

In the first section of the discussion the results of this research, which examined the nature and effects of social support, are summarised and linked to other relevant research findings. The implications of this study's results are also described. This is followed by an examination of intervention programs designed to enhance social support for teachers. Finally the limitations, future possible research directions and conclusions are outlined.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Seventy-five teachers in teaching positions of varying seniority from 20 secondary schools within the Christchurch area were interviewed. The teachers interviewed represented a wide range of subject areas and teaching experience levels.

Job Satisfaction

Although the level of satisfaction with teaching ranged widely within the sample, the majority of teachers (80 percent) were moderately to highly satisfied with their job. Despite this, 20 percent of the sample showed moderate to low levels of satisfaction with teaching. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978) and Galloway, Boswell, Panckhurst, Boswell and Green (1982) both reported very similar results as most of their samples (70-80 percent) stated they were fairly or very satisfied with teaching. A significantly higher proportion of teachers holding

official responsibilities than assistant and list A teachers, indicated high levels of job satisfaction. Galloway et al (1982) also found a general tendency for older and experienced teachers to express the greatest job satisfaction. They suggest this may be due to the fact that the older group are more likely to hold permanent positions and they are also the survivors because many dissatisfied teachers have left.

Teachers appeared to be most satisfied with the intrinsic aspects of their job such as the freedom they had to choose their own method of working, the amount of responsibility given to them, and the amount of variety in their jobs. In contrast, teachers were least satisfied with the industrial relations between the teachers' union and their employer, and their chance of promotion. Intrinsic aspects of teaching were also found to be important sources of satisfaction by Galloway et al (1982).

Intention to leave their present position

Nearly one-quarter of the sample (20) were classified as having high intentions of leaving their present job within the next couple of years. Two-thirds of female teachers illustrated low to moderate intentions of leaving with only 15 percent outlining strong leaving intentions. In comparison male teachers were split between those with low to moderate intentions of leaving (45 percent) and those who stated they were very likely to leave (44 percent). Reasons given for intending to

leave their current position included both personal reasons (for example to travel) and reasons associated with the job itself (for example, pressures). Even though some teachers wanted to remain in the education system, others were examining the possibility of a career change. Official New Zealand statistics indicate that approximately 10 percent of secondary teachers in 1986 left their teaching position with the highest figure leaving to go to other occupations (see Appendix C).

Morale

Although the majority of teachers displayed moderate to high levels of positive morale, there were also indications of a low to moderate level of negative morale among teachers. Low levels of morale were also observed among a small group of teachers in the Papatoetoe-Otara-Mangere survey conducted in 1977-78 by the NZEI (Chinnery, 1979).

The effects of social support

Several aspects correlated with all four criterion variables and social support predicted job satisfaction, positive morale and negative morale, but not intention to leave their current position. Both this study and a variety of other studies have observed the link between social support and job satisfaction and found direct, beneficial effects (LaRocco et al, 1980; LaRocco and Jones, 1978; Ganster et al, 1986; Blau 1981; Chisholm, et al 1986). Four variables predicted job satisfaction, with the most powerful predictor being teachers' satis-

faction with their support. This was one of the most significant findings. Teachers who were satisfied with the support they received were also satisfied with teaching. The fact that social support was significantly related to job satisfaction is important because job satisfaction is a crucial element in teachers' intentions to leave their position, morale and in general, quality of working life.

Three variables predicted teachers' intentions of leaving their present job. These included gender, job satisfaction and negative morale with the last being the strongest predictor. A possible reason why social support was not related to teachers' leaving intentions is that the decision to leave a school is a complex one. Individuals are influenced by many factors and support may be one of many variables that are considered. Further, the relevance of social support may vary according to the person and the situation.

Positive morale was predicted by teachers' job satisfaction, the number of actual supporters, and the number of years full-time teaching. The most significant predictor was job satisfaction, indicating that teachers who were more satisfied with their job had higher levels of positive morale.

Finally, negative morale was best predicted by three variables - the number of actual supporters, the number of actual conflictual relationships and teachers' need for support. The number of actual conflictual relation-

ships was the strongest predictor of negative morale indicating that individuals who had a lower number of conflictual relationships in their support networks had higher levels of negative morale. Coughlan (1970) in his study of teacher morale found 'working relationships' to be one of the dimensions underlying teacher morale. Again the fact that social support affected teachers' morale is significant, as morale levels affect a variety of aspects of teachers' jobs including the quality of their teaching.

Social support and teachers' support networks

Marked individual differences were observed both in the characteristics and composition of teachers' support networks. This implies that there is no one type of support network that is the 'most supportive.' The number of supporters varied enormously although more experienced teachers tended to have a larger number of supporters than newer, less experienced teachers. In addition, the size of an individual's support network appeared to represent the individual's personal choice or sometimes the total amount of support available. More experienced teachers also tended to have a greater number of reciprocal relationships. This may be because they are expected and also able to help less experienced teachers. Assistant teachers were named most frequently as sources of conflict by one-half of the sample. The number of sources of conflict in an individual's network was found to relate to the number of years a teacher had

taught at the school. Newer staff members appeared to have fewer sources of conflict than teachers who had taught at the school for a greater number of years. Only a small number of teachers (9) named conflictual supporters who were individuals who provided both support and conflict. Overall, more experienced teachers tended to have a greater number of both supporters and sources of conflict in their networks. This suggests that as a teacher establishes themself in a school, they develop their own group of supporters and also come into contact with people who become sources of conflict.

Although gender differences in the proportion of male and female teachers in support networks were difficult to determine and influenced by a number of other factors, some possible differences relating to emotional support were detected and these need further exploration. Vaux (1985) in his review of studies examining social support and gender, tentatively concludes that there appear to be few gender differences. Differences which have been discovered by a number of studies tend to typically favour women and emerge for emotional support.

An important finding was the discovery of the wide range of people who support teachers. Overall, workplace sources of support (assistant teachers, HOD, school staff ...) were named most frequently. Non-workplace sources of support (friends and family) appeared to be important sources of emotional and socialising support. Previous research concerned with teacher support has concentrated

exclusively on the issue of the supportiveness of only colleagues and supervisors. Studies conducted by Fimian and Santoro (1982) and Fimian (1986) both suggested that teachers received more support from co-workers than from supervisors although Fimian (1986) observed that supervisor support moderated teacher stress. These findings contrast with those of Sutton (1984) who found that co-worker support was not related to any of the strains examined, while Sutton's evidence regarding the importance of supervisor support was inconclusive. The results of this study suggest that both co-worker and supervisor support are crucial for teachers and that, on the whole, more support appears to be available from co-workers than from supervisors. In addition other workplace sources of support (school staff ...) as well as nonwork sources of support contribute to provide teachers with support in their job. The implications of these results are that work sources of support are the most appropriate focus for support interventions, especially colleagues and supervisors. In some situations, however, it may be plausible to utilise other work sources of support such as school staff.

A relevant factor which emerged was the wide variation in teachers' satisfaction with the different types of support, even though most were satisfied with their overall support. Teachers were clearly less satisfied with the amount of feedback and opportunities for social contact than other types of support. Also, list A

teachers were less satisfied than other teachers, with the material aid they received.

The importance of feedback and socialising for teachers is further illustrated by the fact that teachers had greater needs for these than other types of support. List A teachers also had greater needs for support than other teachers, particularly for informational support. Overall, most teachers indicated a moderate need for support but this need was greater when a teacher was new to a school. This implies that support interventions should be targeted towards junior teachers in particular, but also towards teachers who are new to a school, those with personal crises, or towards all teachers during certain stressful times of the year such as reports, exams or major production.

The results also shed doubt on the adequacy of social support currently available to teachers. Nearly one-half of the sample described recent situations in which they felt support was lacking. In particular, three situations appeared to dominate: the preparation of resources or programs; dealing with discipline or child-related problems; and assessing their own progress. These three areas also emerged as important areas of support when teachers were asked to describe behaviours they perceived as supportive. The behaviours most frequently mentioned as supportive included: feedback, help from HOD, sharing of resources, an effective discipline system, recognition of work and "colleagues encouraging or listening to me."

Most teachers were also able to identify behaviours which they found to be unsupportive. The most frequently named unsupportive behaviours included: criticisms and complaints, being given extra responsibilities, lack of feedback, problems organising equipment, unco-operative 'others', political factors and an inefficient discipline system. These results suggest a range of behaviours and situations which could be targeted to increase the supportiveness of teachers' environments. The three areas outlined earlier - resource development, child-related matters and feedback deserve special emphasis as they appeared to be behaviours which teachers found supportive but were also lacking support.

Teachers' responses to four questions indicated there were a number of barriers, both individual and environmental, to teachers giving and seeking social support. Lack of time, pressures from work and personality factors (jealousies ...) were the three most commonly outlined reasons why teachers felt colleagues were unsupportive. Lack of time, their own pressures and tiredness were named as factors why they themselves were not always supportive of others. Two-thirds of teachers also outlined a variety of reasons which made them reluctant to utilise their support resources. Professional pride emerged as an important characteristic of teachers and a powerful and pervasive barrier to help-seeking across a wide range of teachers and schools. Lastly, a number of aspects of the school environment were mentioned by teachers as

encouraging or discouraging social support in secondary schools. The school's philosophy or atmosphere was the most frequently named aspect. Philosophies which encouraged staff to work as a team, to communicate and share problems encouraged a supportive environment. On the other hand, school environments dominated by tension, intolerance, inconsistency, mistrust and criticisms discouraged staff members from being supportive. Constant contact with teachers around a school increased support while scattered and spread-out classrooms, labs or departments increased feelings of isolation and made it more difficult for teachers to support others. An established support system within a school, for example a buddy system, or an efficient discipline system encouraged support to develop among teachers. A relaxing interval and staffroom also promoted a supportive environment. Finally, fragmented, small or an inadequate number of work areas hampered the sharing of ideas and resources. These factors which influenced or provided a barrier to social support must be taken into account in any attempt to increase support in the schools as otherwise any program is likely to have only a limited impact. In particular, the constraints of the present system, the norms and values of the teaching profession, especially teachers' professional pride, and the impact of the school environment must be carefully considered. The results also suggest that individual variations in attitudes toward support giving and seeking may, in some instances,

provide a barrier to interventions.

Many teachers felt that their support resources needed to be enhanced and listed areas for improvement. The most frequently outlined areas included: the sharing of resources, more non-teaching time, more social opportunities, increased feedback opportunities to administrators, acknowledgement of progress, and fewer criticisms. Interestingly some of these recommendations are similar to suggestions made by both teachers and researchers for reducing teacher stress (PPTA Journal, 1983-84; Roper, 1979; Dunham, 1980; Print, 1981). This suggests that the improvement of support resources may also reduce teacher stress.

Overall, the results of this study have made a significant contribution to the limited research concerning teacher support. The results provide evidence that support influences job satisfaction and morale, and increase our understanding of the nature of social support among teachers.

4.2 INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Intervention programs have aimed to enhance social support and these have been designed in a variety of ways. Such programs have taken the form of establishing support groups or training programs to enhance interpersonal helping skills, developing cohesive relationships, or improving support to 'high-stress' groups (Mitchell, Billings and Moos, 1982). Many of the teachers inter-

viewed described specific recommendations to enhance social support in schools. However, several researchers have outlined general goals organisations can work towards when improving the supportiveness of their members.

Asp and Garbarino (1983) suggest that two particular changes within schools would contribute to the development of support systems among teachers. First, teachers need to be encouraged by administrators and senior teachers to depend on each other for support. Second, greater co-operation and collective activity needs to be built into the teaching system. In particular, teachers need to work together as a team as this lessens isolation, and defensive behaviour becomes unnecessary. They also emphasise that the most appropriate means of encouraging support for each school has to be analysed.

House (1981) notes that a necessary condition for any intervention is that there is a strong commitment to the goal of enhancing social support throughout the entire organisation. He suggests four principles which organisations can follow to make members more supportive toward each other. First, individuals must be physically accessible and also psychologically accessible, that is communication must be open. Second, it needs to be recognised that most individuals need training or instructions on how to become more supportive. Third, supporting others needs to be part of the value system of an organisation, that is, supportive behaviour must be

rewarded and reinforced throughout the organisation. Finally, if resources are scarce, House suggests that efforts should be directed towards workers with high levels of stress or those undergoing work-related transitions such as job loss or retirement.

It is clearly necessary that if any school wants to improve the social support for its teachers, that staff throughout the school be committed to this goal. Administrative backing is especially crucial as it was noticed that the priority a school placed on supporting its teachers, usually reflected the head's own priority. The goal to enhance the supportiveness of schools therefore necessitates that supportive people be in leadership positions. For example, administrators may care to examine a candidate's concern for teacher support when promotions are discussed. In essence, administrators need both to reinforce teacher support as well as provide a model for colleagues to follow. This goal can also be achieved by ensuring that people in positions of support (Deans, tutors ...) are given adequate training. In addition the school environment needs to be made conducive to the development of supportive relationships, possibly in ways outlined earlier. Finally, the barrier of professional pride must be tackled. Professional pride, it appears, is linked to anxieties about teaching competence, therefore it may plausibly be reduced by increasing the feedback teachers receive. Social support then, is a crucial element in many teachers' jobs and will

become increasingly important as changes continue such as the introduction of the Picot Report in October 1989.

4.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Limitations

The most significant limitation of this study was the use of two non-probability sampling techniques. As teachers were suggested by their colleagues, this may have biased the sample towards those teachers who were more sociable or widely known. The use of volunteer sampling may have also biased the sample towards those with recent experiences or strong opinions regarding social support. Overall, it is difficult to determine the extent and nature of biases affecting the sample.

A second limitation was the relatively small sample size (n = 75). A larger sample would have allowed for greater generalisability of the results and also controlled for the influence of the school's environment. Despite this, the study allowed the researcher to visit and observe interactions between teachers in different schools. This contributed to the researcher's understanding and interpretation of the results.

Finally, the reliance on the subjective data means that the results might be influenced by factors affecting the respondent's perceptions such as personality or well-being.

Even though this study had several limitations, it was exploratory and given the limited research on teachers

and social support, it has made a significant contribution by expanding knowledge and raising issues for future research.

Future Research

Research examining teachers and social support is still largely in its early stages and little knowledge currently exists. Future research investigating this area could explore several issues. First, this study suggests that there is a link between a school's environment and its support system. Empirical research is needed on this link and could be gained by examining a wider variety of schools and by making comparisons between schools. Gender differences in the seeking of support and the source of such support also deserve attention. The effects of 'supporting others' on the helper has received little attention and could provide relevant information particularly in relation to the study of burnout among teachers. Researchers and administrators may also benefit from information regarding personal factors which affect teachers' perceptions of support and their attitudes toward support seeking and giving. Finally, little research exists on the causes of turnover among New Zealand teachers, or the factors which affect levels of morale among teachers.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This study has explored social support among 75 secondary school teachers. The findings suggest a number of conclusions regarding teachers and social support. Social support was found to have direct and beneficial effects on teachers' morale and levels of job satisfaction. Teachers' support networks illustrated considerable individual variation. However, more experienced teachers tended to have a greater number of supporters, reciprocal relationships and conflictual relationships than newer staff members. Work sources of support, especially assistant teachers and their HOD, were the most important sources of support for the majority of teachers. Non-work sources of support, notably family and friends, were mentioned as sources of emotional and socialising support. Although most teachers were satisfied with the overall support they received, they were less satisfied with the amount of feedback they received and the opportunities they had for social contact. Teachers also rated higher needs for these two types than other types of support. Overall, however, need for support was greatest for teachers new to a school and 'moderate' for most teachers. One-half of the teachers reported inadequate social support and many suggested ways in which support for teachers in secondary schools could be improved. Finally, support seeking and giving among teachers was influenced by a number of individual and environmental factors. The most powerful influences appeared to be the

time constraints of the present system, the professional pride of teachers and the school environment.

This study has focused on secondary school teachers but there is also a need to examine social support among primary school teachers. Unlike secondary teachers, they have no non-teaching time, they teach the same class and are generally in the same classroom during the day. In conclusion, teachers are a valuable resource to the community and this research has outlined the significant contribution social support makes to teachers and their jobs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Department of Psychology
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TEACHER SUPPORT SURVEY

Helena Martin B.A. Post-graduate Research Student
Psychology Department.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather information about the nature of the support received and its effects in a sample of secondary school teachers in Christchurch. All information disclosed during the interview will be kept confidential and anonymous. If at any time during the interview you are unsure about a question or would like it repeated, do not hestitate to ask me.

- -

Respongent number code _____

Sex _____ male

_____ female

School _____

cols 1-4 ☐☐☐☐

col 6 ☐

cols 7-8 ☐☐

A. PERSONAL INFORMATION.

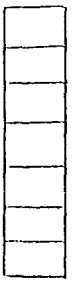
To begin I need to know some information about you.

1. How long have you taught at this school?

col 9 

_____ 1 year or less
_____ between 2 and 5 years
_____ between 5 and 10 years
_____ 10 years or more

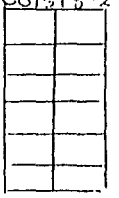
2. What are the levels of the classes you are currently teaching?

cols 10-16 

number of classes	form level
_____	1
_____	2
_____	3
_____	4
_____	5
_____	6
_____	7

col 17 

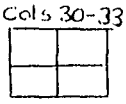
3. What subjects do you teach?

Cols 18-29 

_____
_____

4. How many years have you been teaching?

_____ full-time
_____ part-time

Cols 30-33 

5. What is your teaching position?

col 34 

_____ list A
_____ assistant teacher
_____ position of responsibility (specify) _____
_____ head of department
_____ deputy principal
_____ principal
_____ other (specify) _____

6. What is your highest educational qualification?

_____ school certificate
_____ university entrance
_____ technical institute diploma/certificate
_____ teacher's college diploma
_____ teacher's college diploma and university degree
_____ trained teacher's certificate
_____ trained teacher's certificate and university degree
_____ other (specify) _____

Col 35 ☐

7. Which age group do you belong to?

_____ 19-24
_____ 25-29
_____ 30-34
_____ 35-39
_____ 40-44
_____ 45-49
_____ 50-54
_____ 55-59
_____ 60-64 t

Col 36 ☐

8. What is your marital status?

_____ single — GO TO QUE 10
_____ married
_____ divorced/separated — GO TO QUE 10
_____ widowed — GO TO QUE 10
_____ other (specify) _____

Col 37 ☐

9. What is your partner's occupation?

_____ teacher
_____ other (specify) _____
_____ _____

Cols 38-39 ☐☐

10. How many children do you have?

_____ none — GO TO QUE 11
_____ (enter number) — GO TO PART B

Cols 40-41 ☐☐

b) How old are they?

_____ under 5 years
_____ between 5 and 10 years
_____ between 10 and 15 years
_____ between 15 and 21 years
_____ over 21

Cols 42-46 ☐☐☐☐☐

B. ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHING POSITION.

This next section deals with how you view your teaching position.

11. The following set of items concerns various aspects of your job. I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you feel with each of these features in your present job.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I----------I
extremely very moderately not moderately very extremely
dissatisfied sure satisfied

Cols 48-62

_____ the physical work conditions
_____ the freedom to choose your own method of working
_____ your colleagues
_____ the recognition you get for good work
_____ your immediate head
_____ the amount of responsibility you are given
_____ your rate of pay
_____ your opportunity to use your abilities
_____ industrial relations between the teacher's union and your employer
_____ your chance of promotion
_____ the way your school is managed/administered
_____ the attention paid to suggestions you make
_____ your hours of work
_____ the amount of variety in your job
_____ your job security

Cols 63-64

12. Are your feelings today a true sample of the way you usually feel about your job?
_____ yes
_____ no
_____ other (specify) _____

Col 65

13. The next three questions relate to your future job intentions.
a) How likely is it that you will actively look for a new job in the next year?
_____ not at all likely

_____2

_____3 somewhat likely

_____4

_____5 quite likely

_____6

_____7 extremely likely

b) I often think about quitting.

_____1 strongly disagree

_____2 disagree

_____3 slightly disagree

_____4 neither agree nor disagree

_____5 slightly agree

_____6 agree

_____7 strongly agree

c) I will probably look for a new job in the next year?

_____1 strongly disagree

_____2 disagree

_____3 slightly disagree

_____4 neither agree nor disagree

_____5 slightly agree

_____6 agree

_____7 strongly agree

cols 66-67 [ ][ ]

14. During the last few weeks did you ever feel any of these things?

Yes/ No

__/__ very lonely or remote from other teaching colleagues?

__/__ proud because a colleague had complimented you on something you had done?

cols 68-69 [ ][ ]

__/__ bored?

__/__ so restless that you couldn't sit long in a chair?

__/__ particularly excited or interested in something?

cols 70-71 [ ][ ]

__/__ that things were going your way?

__/__ depressed or very unhappy?

__/__ pleased about having accomplished something?

__/__ on top of the world?

__/__ upset because a colleague criticised you?

C. SOCIAL SUPPORT.

I would now like to get an indication of the people who provide you, in your teaching position with support or help. By support I mean people who have lent you things, assisted you do things, provided encouragement, advice, feedback or who show concern and who you socialise with. These people might be other teachers, your head of department, the deputy principal, the principal, deans, educational advisors, school staff, your partner, children or friends. Any of these people may be named more than once.

CARD 2
cols 1-4

15. Material aid and assistance.

Who are the people you knowthat would lend or give you something (for example, books, teaching resource materials..) or who would help you do something (e.g give you a ride to school, help plan activities..)?

cols 6-7

cols 8-9

cols 10-12

cols 13-16

cols 17-22

Name	Position	Sex
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

For each person could you tell me what position they occupy and their sex.

b) During the past month, which of these people actually loaned or gave you something or helped you do something?
(circle names or add relevant names and descriptions)

Col 23

c) During the past month, how much did you need help or the loan of things.

_____ not at all
_____ a little
_____ some
_____ alot

Col 24

d) During the past month, how satisfied were you with the things or help you got?

_____ very dissatisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ not sure
_____ satisfied
_____ very satisfied

16. Sharing personal feelings.

cols 26-27

cols 28-29

cols 30-32

cols 33-36

cols 37-42

If you wanted to talk to someone about your personal feelings and experiences, who would you talk to (e.g who can you confide in, who encourages you, shows concern, provides reassurance.,)?

Name	Position	Sex
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

b) During the last month which of these people have you actually talked to about your personal feelings and experiences?

(circle or add names)

c) During the last four weeks, how much did you need to talk to someone about your personal feelings?

_____ not at all

Col 43

_____ a little
_____ some
_____ a lot

d) During the last four weeks, how satisfied were you with your opportunities to talk about personal feelings?

Col 44

_____ very dissatisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ not sure
_____ satisfied
_____ very satisfied

17. Advice and information.
Who would you go to if you needed advice or information (e.g about inspections, grading, the curriculum, new teaching methods, problems with particular children, access to certain resources..)?

cols 46-47
cols 48-49
cols 50-52
cols 53-56
cols 57-62

Name	Position	Sex
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

b) Which of these people actually gave you information or advice over the last month? (circle or add names)

c) How much during the past month, did you need advice or information?

Col 63

_____ not at all
_____ a little
_____ some
_____ a lot

d) How satisfied were you with the advice or information given to you?

_____ very dissatisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ not sure
_____ satisfied
_____ very satisfied

18. Feedback and guidance.

Who are the people that you could expect to let you know how they feel about your ideas of the thimgs you do? (e.g letting you know how you're doing in your job, commenting on your suggestions..)

Name	Position	Sex
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

b) Which of these people actually gave you feedback about your ideas or actions? (circle or add names)

c) Over the last four weeks, how much would you have liked people to let you know what they thought about your ideas or the things you did?

_____ not at all
_____ a little
_____ some
_____ a lot

d) During the last month, how satisfied were you with the feedback you recieved about your ideas or the things you did?

_____ very dissatisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ not sure
_____ satisfied
_____ very satisfied

col 64 ☐

cols 66-67 ☐☐

cols 68-69 ☐☐

cols 70-72 ☐☐☐

cols 73-76 ☐☐☐☐

CARD 3

cols 1-4 ☐☐☐☐

cols 6-11 ☐☐☐☐☐☐

col 12 ☐

col 13 ☐

19. Social participation.

Who are the people that you get together with, or go out with and whose company you like?

Name	Position	Sex

b) During the past month which of these people did you actually get together with? (circle or add names)

c) During the last four weeks, how much did you feel the need to get together with people whose company you like?

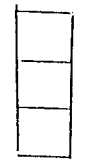
_____ not at all
_____ a little
_____ some
_____ a lot

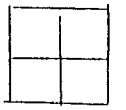
d) How satisfied were you with the opportunities you had to get together with people whose company you like?

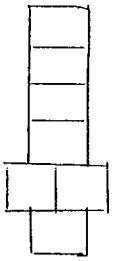
_____ very dissatisfied
_____ dissatisfied
_____ not sure
_____ satisfied
_____ very satisfied

cols 15-16 

cols 17-18 

cols 19-21 

cols 22-25 

cols 26-32 

col 33 

col 34 

20. Who have you supported over the last month by giving information, feedback, loaned or given things to, assisted in a situation, who has confided in you?..

Name	Position	Sex

21. Negative interactions.
Who are the people that you can expect to have some unpleasant disagreements with or people that you can expect to make you angry and upset?

Name	Position	Sex

b) Which of these people have you had some disagreements with or have upset you? (circle or add names)

cols 36-37

cols 38-40

cols 41-44

cols 45-48

col 49

col 50

cols 51-58

D. OPEN-ENDED SOCIAL SUPPORT QUESTIONS

22. What have been the most supportive things someone has said to you or things that someone has done for you in the last term? (e.g taking a child from your class into theirs..)

23. What have been the most unsupportive or unhelpful things someone has said or done for you in the last term? (e.g no-one helped you organise an event...)

24. Can you recall a situation(s) in the last term in which you needed some form of support (information, encouragement, assistamce..), or would have benefited from it but found it lacking?
    Probe for- What type of situation was it? (discipline-related..)
    What type of support was needed? Who from?
    What effects did this have? (frustration, stress,worry..)
    What did you do? (talked to HOD..)
    Why wasn't support provided in that situation? (person concerned incapable of providing support..)

25. Can you see any reasons why colleagues are not always supportive?

26. Are there any reasons why you are not more supportive to others?

27. Does your school environment (atmosphere) encourage or make it difficult to be supportive? How?

28. Does anything prevent you from seeking support or help from others? (everyone is busy..)

29. Do you think that teachers in your school can be more supportive of each other? If so, how? (being more available, holding regular meetings..)

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION.

APPENDIX B

Behaviours named as supportive by teachers

	Behaviours	Number of times rated as supportive
1.	Positive feedback	36
2.	Help from HOD (suggestions, guidance ..)	14
3.	Department colleagues sharing resources, ideas	17
4.	Effective discipline system	13
5.	Appreciation or recognition for my work	12
6.	Colleagues who listen or encourage me	8
7.	Colleagues who take on work to help me (marking a test ...)	7
8.	An individual mentioned as supportive	7
9.	Leave organised without problems	5
10.	Feeling able to go to others, others offering help	4
11.	Colleagues showing concern when I'm ill	4
12.	Others being encouraging of my extra-curricular activities	3
13.	Parent back-up and feedback	3
14.	Feedback about an event I organised	3
15.	Feedback from a management student behaviour course	3
16.	Being given extra non-teaching time to catch up on work	3
17.	Regular department meetings	2
18.	My HOD or DP setting aside time each week to spend time with me	2
19.	Colleagues giving me information about the school or its procedures	2
20.	Being encouraged to extend my skills	2
21.	A colleague praising my teaching above others	2

	Behaviours	Number of times rated as supportive
22.	Being given time off to go to inservice courses	1
23.	Getting a ride to school	1
24.	People taking over extracurricular activities when I need the break	1
25.	Jobs I ask to be done, being done ahead of time	1
26.	Meetings being set up for teachers who teach the same class	1
27.	Technicians fixing equipment	1
28.	Someone recognising you're under pressure	1
29.	Women's group meetings	1
30.	Others asking how 'things are going'	1
31.	People agreeing with you on controversial matters	1
32.	Being asked to stand for a position	1
33.	Meeting with colleagues socially	1
34.	HOD's sorting out inter-department bickering	1
35.	Getting advice from colleagues about a student/class	1
36.	Colleagues willing to go through programs that I needed to go through	1
37.	DP backed me up for resources from the Department of Education	1

APPENDIX C

New Zealand Teaching Turnover Statistics

(taken from Education Statistics of NZ 1987. 1988, pp.148-151)

A. Number of teachers in State secondary schools

	Males	Females	Total
Total	7,669	5,711	13,380
Part-time	471	2,254	2,725
Relieving	287	623	910

B. Losses and intakes of State teaching service in 1986

	Males	Females	Total
Intakes -			
T.Coll.	195	225	420
Other	479	758	1,237
Losses	651	741	1,392
Difference	23	242	265

C. Losses by reasons

Reason	
Domestic occupation	273
To other occupations	321
Other teaching service	68
Retirement	191
Death	9
Suspension	1
Unsuitability	6
Ill-health	28
Overseas travel	166
Full-time study	9
Others (not specified)	5
Relieving and part-time	257
Transfer to other branches	58
	1,392

APPENDIX D

7 Dormer Street
Christchurch, 5
Ph. 523-303

22 November 1988

Dear

Earlier this year I interviewed a number of your staff for my study on the nature and effects of social support among secondary school teachers. I have completed an analysis of my results and enclose a summary of the findings that may be of interest to you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or would like further information. Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Martin

RESULTS

Introduction

The sample consisted of 75 teachers from a range of teaching positions. Teachers were interviewed from 20 secondary schools within the Christchurch area and represented a wide range of subject areas and teaching experience levels.

Job satisfaction

Teachers' satisfaction with their job ranged widely. Most teachers, however, were moderately to highly satisfied with their job although one-fifth showed moderate-to-low levels of job satisfaction. A higher proportion of teachers holding official responsibilities indicated high levels of job satisfaction than assistant and list A teachers.

Teachers were most satisfied with the freedom they had to choose their own method of working, the amount of responsibility they were given and the amount of variety in their job. Teachers were least satisfied with industrial relations between the teachers' union and their employer (28 percent satisfied) and their chance of promotion (40 percent satisfied).

Intention to leave

One-quarter of teachers had high intentions of leaving their present job within the next couple of years. Two-thirds of female teachers had low intentions of leaving. Male teachers were split between those with low intentions of leaving (45 percent) and those who were very likely to leave (44 percent).

Reasons for leaving included personal reasons (for example to travel) and factors associated with the job (for example finding it emotionally draining). Some wanted to remain in the education system but many were thinking of jobs elsewhere.

Morale

The level of positive morale among teachers was moderate to high but despite this, there were noticeable signs of negative or poor morale.

Social support was found to relate to and predict job satisfaction, positive morale and negative morale, but not intention to leave. One of the strongest findings was that teachers who were satisfied with the support they received were also satisfied with their job.

Social support and teachers' support networks

The number of people who actively supported teachers showed considerable variation. More experienced teachers tended to have a larger number of supporters. Teachers most often supported and were supported by teachers who were equal or junior to them. One-half of the teachers named one or more others as a source of conflict. Assistant teachers were the most frequently mentioned sources of conflict followed by principals, position of responsibility holders and heads of department.

A wide range of people were named as supportive including: administrators, other teachers at the school (including deans), school staff (particularly the guidance counsellor), teachers at different schools, teachers' college lecturers, department of education inspectors, teaching associations, friends and family. Overall workplace sources of support (assistant teachers, school staff, head of department etc.) dominated. Friends and family were important sources of emotional and socialising support.

Most teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with the support they received. Teachers were most satisfied with the material aid and information they received but a lower number were satisfied with the amount of feedback and opportunities for social contact. List A teachers were less satisfied with the material aid they received than other teachers.

Only a few teachers stated they had low needs for support. Most indicated a moderate need for support while the need for support was particularly strong for teachers new to a school. The majority of teachers stated they needed 'a little' material aid, emotional and informational support, but 'some' or 'a lot' of feedback and socialising support. List A teachers needed significantly more information than other teachers.

Teachers listed a wide variety of supportive and unsupportive behaviours. The behaviours most frequently mentioned as supportive included: positive feedback, help from own head of department (over discipline, resource problems etc.), sharing of resources, recognition of work, colleagues listening to or encouraging me, colleagues who take on my work and an effective discipline system (that is having a system where they could refer students to, problems are seen to quickly, teachers are able to talk to someone and feel backed up on decisions). Criticisms and complaints were the most commonly named unsupportive behaviours. Also mentioned as unsupportive were: having extra responsibilities given to me, lack of feedback, problems organising equipment, lack of co-operation from others, political factors and an inefficient discipline system.

Thirty-six teachers recalled one or more situations in which they felt they lacked social support. The range of situations described is displayed in Table 1.

Lack of time, others' pressures and personalities were the three most important reasons why teachers felt colleagues were unsupportive. Lack of time, their own pressures and tiredness were named as factors why they themselves were not always supportive of others.

Less than one-third of the sample stated that nothing prevented them from seeking support when they needed it. The remaining two-thirds outlined a number of factors which made them reluctant to seek help from others. Professional pride was the most commonly mentioned reason as Table 2 shows.

In order to understand how environmental factors influence social support, teachers were asked to identify aspects of their school environment which encouraged or discouraged support. The most frequently named aspects which encouraged support were the school's philosophy, an established support and discipline system, and constant contact with other teachers around the

school (see Table 3 for other aspects). The spread-out nature and distances of schools, an unpleasant or tense staffroom or interval, the school's philosophy and inadequate workspaces were commonly mentioned as discouraging social support (see Table 4 for other aspects).

Finally, 65 teachers made a wide range of suggestions as to how social support could be improved in secondary schools. The variation in the recommendations in Table 5, reflects the wide range of school situations the sample was responding to.

Table 1. Situations Where Teachers Felt They Lacked Social Support

	Situation	Number of times situation named
1.	Preparing resources or programs	16
2.	Dealing with discipline/child problems	11
3.	Assessing own progress	11
4.	Information not passed on	6
5.	Feeling pressured	5
6.	Large or differing ability classes	4
7.	Organising events	4
8.	'Political'	3
9.	Needing to talk to someone	2
10.	Inadequate support from HOD	2
11.	Few social activities	1
12.	New to the school	1
13.	Time constraints of class lessons	1

Table 2. Factors Preventing Teachers From Seeking Support

	Factor	Number of teachers who named factor
1.	Nothing - if I need help I go to someone	23
2.	Pride - not wanting to look silly or incompetent	25
3.	Others are too busy or pressured	13
4.	I am careful or wary of who I go to for help (Have my own support system)	12
5.	I am too busy or pressured	10
6.	I work independently of others, am self-reliant	7
7.	If they're unapproachable or I don't know them well	5
8.	If they were unsupportive in the past	2
9.	Others' inefficiency or lack of feedback to me	2
10.	Not wanting to be overdependent on others	2
11.	Not speaking up or feeling positive enough to ask for help	2
12.	Departmental rivalry	1
13.	Unaware of the support systems in the school	1

Table 3. Aspects of the School Environment That Encourage Support

	Aspect	Number of teachers who stated aspect
1.	School's philosophy (working as a team, 'caring' school)	19
2.	Established support and discipline system (for example a buddy system)	10
3.	Constant contact with others	8
4.	Communal and separate work area from the staffroom	5
5.	Open and friendly staff	5
6.	Accessible and approachable administrators	4
7.	Social activities	4
8.	Pleasant/relaxing staffroom, relaxing interval	4
9.	Positive and regular staff metings	3
10.	Department encouraging sharing of resources, ideas	1
11.	Support encouraged among women staff members	1
12.	Praise from administration	1

Table 4. Aspects of the School Environment That Discourage Support

	Aspect	Number of teachers who stated aspect
1.	Distances within the school	18
2.	Unpleasant or tense staffroom, tense interval	15
3.	School's philosophy (for example lack of trust and openess, tension between groups)	14
4.	Fragmented, small, or an insufficient number of work areas	11
5.	People difficult to find	7
6.	School system - lack of time	5
7.	Inadequate, run-down physical environment	5
8.	Inadequate, inefficient discipline system	4
9.	Tensions between departments	3
10.	No-one to talk to about problems	2
11.	Poor communication	2
12.	No effort by administration to praise staff	1
13.	Lack of social activities	1
14.	Staff not willing to support a new principal	1
15.	Autocratic school	1
16.	Unfriendly office staff	1
17.	Carpooling and having to leave immediately after school	1

Table 5. Recommendations Made by Teachers to Improve Support

	Recommendation	Number of teachers who made the recommendation
1.	Sharing of resources, less competition within and between departments	15
2.	More non-teaching time	10
3.	More social opportunities - time to talk	8
4.	Fewer criticisms	8
5.	Feedback committee or discussion forum	8
6.	Acknowledgement of progress, greater recognition	7
7.	Be more receptive to newcomers and relievers	6
8.	Administrators be less removed from staff and aware of classroom demands	6
9.	Visit other classrooms in same or different school	6
10.	More consistent or co-ordinated discipline system, greater back-up for teachers	5
11.	Professional discussions between teachers and their senior over problems, achievements and future directions	5
12.	Improve the standard of the staffroom/interval	5
13.	Halve class sizes	4
14.	More meetings for teachers of the same class to raise problems, compare notes	4
15.	Be more aware and understanding of others	3
16.	More ancillary help for non-teaching tasks or for the preparation of resources	3
17.	Not sit with the same group in the staffroom	3
18.	More regular women's group meetings	3
19.	Initiate a buddy system	3
20.	Less administrative work and more constructive suggestions at departmental meetings	3
21.	Improved workspaces	3
22.	Staff support all extracurricular activities	2
23.	Talk to teacher honestly when a problem arises instead of complaining behind their back	2

(Table continues)

Recommendations Made by Teachers to Improve Support

	Recommendation	Number of teachers
24.	Increased understanding of others' subjects	2
25.	Less hassle getting relievers	2
26.	Improve staff relationships	2
27.	Don't leave teachers on their own to sort out problems	2
28.	Appoint a staff liaison officer to act as a counsellor to staff	1
29.	Less pride among teachers	1
30.	HODs place more emphasis on teacher support than administrative work	1
31.	Decrease stress associated with noise in classrooms	1
32.	List A teaching load the same for first 3 years	1
33.	Better defined syllabus for new courses	1
34.	Return borrowed equipment	1
35.	Better communication between the staff and board	1

APPENDIX E

7 Dormer Street
Christchurch, 5
Ph. 523-303

22 November 1988

Dear

Thank you for your interest and for giving up your time earlier this year to be interviewed. I have prepared a summary of the findings which may be of interest to you.

The aim of the study was to explore the nature and effects of social support in a sample of secondary school teachers. Seventy-five teachers from a range of teaching positions were interviewed over a 3 month period. Teachers were interviewed from 20 secondary schools within the Christchurch area and represented a wide range of subject areas and teaching experience levels.

Most teachers were moderately to highly satisfied with their job although one-fifth were less satisfied. A higher proportion of teachers holding official responsibilities were more satisfied with teaching than assistant and list A teachers. Sixty to seventy percent of teachers were satisfied with many aspects of their job. Teachers were most dissatisfied with 'industrial relations between the teachers' union and your employer' and secondly 'your chance of promotion.'

One-quarter of teachers had high intentions of leaving their job within the next couple of years. Two-thirds of female teachers had low intentions of leaving while male teachers were divided between those with low intentions of leaving and those who stated they were likely to leave.

Although there was a moderate to high level of positive morale among teachers, there were also noticeable signs of negative or poor morale.

Social support was found to relate to and predict job satisfaction, positive morale and negative morale but not intention to leave. One of the strongest findings was that teachers who were satisfied with the support they received were also satisfied with their job.

Teachers' support networks and the social support among teachers were also explored. The number of people who had supported teachers showed considerable variation. However, teachers with more teaching experience tended to have a larger number of supporters. A wide range of people were named as supportive but overall workplace sources of support (HOD, assistant teachers, school staff etc.) appeared to dominate. Friends and family were important sources of emotional and socialising support.

Most teachers stated they were satisfied with the support they had received. Teachers were satisfied with the material aid and information they received but they were less satisfied with the amount of feedback and opportunities for social contact. Only a few teachers stated they had low needs for support.

Most indicated a moderate need for support while the need for support was particularly strong for teachers new to a school. Most teachers stated they needed 'a little' material, emotional and informational support but 'some' or 'a lot' of feedback and socialising support.

A wide variety of behaviours were listed as supportive and as unsupportive. Feedback and material support were rated most frequently as supportive while criticisms and complaints were the most commonly named unsupportive behaviours.

Thirty-six teachers recalled one or more situations in which they felt they lacked support. Although these situations varied, 3 dominated. These were preparing resources or programs, dealing with discipline or child-related problems and assessing their progress.

Two-thirds of teachers identified factors which made them reluctant to seek support from others. Professional pride was the most commonly mentioned reason.

A number of factors of the school environment were named as encouraging or discouraging support. The school's philosophy, constant contact with other teachers, an established support and discipline system encouraged support. The spread-out nature and distances of schools, an unpleasant or tense staffroom or interval, the school's philosophy and inadequate workspaces discouraged social support among teachers.

A wide range of suggestions were made to improve social support in secondary schools. The most frequently mentioned ones included: more non-contact time, less competition within and between departments (sharing resources), more social opportunities, fewer criticisms, greater recognition, being more receptive to newcomers and relievers, visiting others' classes and being able to feed back ideas to administrators.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or if you would like any more information. Thank you again for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Helena Martin